

**Policies and Procedures  
Division of Clinical Laboratory Science  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
2025-2026**

*All students must document annually that they have read, understand, and agree to these policies.*

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## Professional Objectives

After reading the program policies and receiving appropriate instruction, students in the Division of Clinical Laboratory Science (CLS) are expected to:

1. Conform to the [ASCLS Code of Ethics](https://ascls.org/code-of-ethics/) (<https://ascls.org/code-of-ethics/>).
2. Abide by all [Student Conduct Policies](#) of the University.
3. Adhere to all policies and guidelines of the Department of Health Sciences (DHS), Division of Clinical Laboratory Science (CLS), and assigned clinical facilities.
4. Comply with all current public health guidelines, local regulations, and facility requirements to protect public health.
5. Demonstrate enthusiasm and interest in the profession of clinical laboratory science.
6. When in the student or clinical laboratory, work in accordance with annual required safety training, and as outlined in CLS and facility policies.
7. Promote and protect public health at all times.
8. Conform to the dress code policies of the Division of CLS and of clinical facilities.
9. Report to lecture, laboratory, and clinical courses on all scheduled days at assigned times. Fully participate in online courses, meeting all deadlines.
10. Notify CLS faculty, and clinical preceptors when applicable, as soon as possible in the case of an unavoidable absence or delay.
11. Prepare for all courses by reviewing all materials provided.
12. Demonstrate competence in using required computer software, instrumentation, and online resources.
13. Demonstrate an understanding of the concepts underlying clinical laboratory tests and policies.
14. Use instructional guidance and constructive criticism to correct deficiencies and/or improve performance.
15. Work cooperatively with instructors, students, and other laboratory personnel.
16. Follow written and oral instructions.
17. Demonstrate the ability to concentrate and avoid distractions while performing laboratory work.
18. Use time in the laboratory effectively to maximize productivity and learning. Offer to help with the workload of the clinical laboratory when appropriate.
19. Communicate in a clear and concise manner and record data accurately and legibly.
20. Recognize, report, and take appropriate corrective action to resolve problems that may arise.
21. Demonstrate diligence in working through and resolving problems.
22. Ensure that the laboratory work area is clean and well stocked.
23. After appropriate time and training, perform laboratory work with organization, accuracy, efficiency, precision, and confidence.
24. Complete and submit all assigned work on time.
25. Maintain the confidentiality of patient information.

## UNC Policy on Equal Care

In addition to the [ASCLS Code of Ethics](#), the Division of Clinical Laboratory Science, consistent with UNC School of Medicine, requires that equal care be given to all patients, regardless of their health status.

## UNC Student Code of Conduct

The UNC Chapel Hill [Student Code of Conduct](#) policy defines the expectations and responsibilities for student behavior, addressing both academic and non-academic misconduct by outlining prohibited actions and potential disciplinary consequences. All suspected instances of misconduct [will be reported](#). Student conduct procedures and usual sanctions are outlined in the [Student Conduct Procedures of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#).

Students in the Division of Clinical Laboratory Science are expected to conduct themselves in accord with the [Student Conduct Mission](#), exemplifying the ideals of academic integrity, ethical behavior,

personal responsibility and civil discourse. Academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable, because any breach in academic integrity, however small, strikes destructively at the University's life and work.

The CLS faculty member in each course is responsible for providing students with clear explanations about the nature of each assignment. Students must complete some course assignments independently, while other assignments may be completed by groups of students. Students are expected to work independently on all examinations. *All graded assignments in the clinical rotations are treated as examinations.* All sources of aid, including but not limited to laboratory procedures, computer resources, smart devices, artificial intelligence tools, textbooks, and supplemental texts, are considered unauthorized unless otherwise specified for each assignment or examination by the faculty or clinical instructor.

Completed examinations are routinely retained by CLS faculty members. Students are allowed to review completed examinations under faculty supervision. Students who do not return their completed examinations or who make copies of examinations are in violation of the Code of Conduct.

Student sharing of instructor content is prohibited unless specifically approved by the instructor. Individual instructors may provide additional guidance, but general information may be found in the University's [Copyright Policy](#) and on UNC Library's [Copyright and Usage](#) page.

If you have any questions about student or faculty responsibilities under the Student Code of Conduct, please consult with CLS faculty, [Student Conduct Staff](#) ([jpa@unc.edu](mailto:jpa@unc.edu) or 919-962-0805), or [Meet with the Dean of Students](#).

## **Program Requirements**

### **Requirements for Graduation**

1. Successful completion of the curriculum and all applicable prerequisites and general college requirements.
2. Adherence to the Code of Ethics and acceptable professional standards.
3. Completion of required documentation.
4. Adherence to rules and regulations.

Each student is responsible for observing the procedures, policies, regulations, and requirements of the University, the School of Medicine, the Department of Health Sciences, and the Division of Clinical Laboratory Science as they are announced here and in other official University and School of Medicine sources. It must be emphasized that the staff of the University, School, Department, and the Division of Clinical Laboratory Science will gladly assist any student with details of their program or other academic problems, but that such assistance does not relieve any student of their individual responsibility for meeting the requirements and observing the regulations of the University, School of Medicine, Department of Health Sciences, and the Division of Clinical Laboratory Science.

### **On-campus and Clinical Rotation Requirements**

All undergraduate CLS students are required to participate in courses on-campus and clinical rotations. MCLS students may participate in elective courses that require attendance on campus (i.e., student teaching). The means and costs of transportation for these required educational experiences, as well as any living expenses (lodging, meals, etc.) or costs for relocation are the student's responsibility.

### **Guarantee of Clinical Experience**

CLS students will be scheduled for clinical rotations at one or more of the program's current clinical sites. If a student's scheduled clinical rotation is cancelled by the clinical site, the CLS education

coordinator will attempt to reschedule that rotation at another clinical site. In the unlikely event that the clinical rotation cannot be scheduled at one of the current clinical sites, the coordinator will either re-schedule the rotation for a subsequent semester at an existing clinical site or establish a new clinical site. An unexpected change in clinical site availability may affect the *date* that a student can finish the program, but will not affect the student's ability to complete all the required clinical rotations.

### Required Documentation

- **All** Division of CLS students must document **annual** review of and agreement to abide by CLS Policies and Procedures.
- **MCLS** students must also document professional credentials verifying their eligibility for the program (e.g., MLS(ASCP)) before beginning the MCLS-MLS program.
- **Undergraduate** CLS students are required to participate in student laboratory courses and clinical placements; therefore are required to meet certain additional documentation requirements, including (but not limited to) immunizations, medical insurance coverage, safety and HIPAA training, criminal background checks, and drug screens. These requirements are necessary to ensure the safety of students, other health care workers, and patients; and are mandated by contractual agreements between the Department of Health Sciences and our clinical affiliates.  
All required MCLS-MLS courses are online, therefore MCLS students only need to submit the types of documentation listed here if taking an elective course that includes a student laboratory component (i.e., teaching a laboratory unit for CLSC 775) or placement in a clinical site other than the student's workplace.

Specific instructions for meeting requirements are made available on Canvas. The requirements are subject to change at any time. A clinical site may require additional documentation beyond what is required by the Division of CLS. Students must meet all requirements for every facility to which they may be assigned. Failure to do so may prevent the student from completing the program.

All costs associated with completing these requirements are the responsibility of the student.

### Confidentiality of Information

All required documentation is submitted directly to and reviewed by the CLS education coordinator. All information received is stored securely and is handled confidentially. It is shared only on a "need to know" basis. For example, in accordance with our contracts, positive criminal background check results will be shared with any clinical site to which the student is assigned so that the affiliate may make a determination about a student's eligibility. Sites may also request personal information such as date of birth, social security number, and/or dates of immunizations. If you have any questions about this, please contact the [CLS education coordinator \(Mrs. Stewart\)](#).

### Certification Exams

At the completion of the BS CLS program, students are well prepared to take entry-level certification examinations in Medical Laboratory Science (i.e., MLS(ASCP)). However, successful completion of the curriculum does not guarantee passing performance on certification exams. Students are strongly encouraged to take a national certification examination as soon as possible after graduation. The Division of Clinical Laboratory Science will provide necessary application information for all students; however certification is an individual, voluntary process. The baccalaureate degree in CLS from the University of North Carolina and the certificate of program completion from the Division of Clinical Laboratory Science are not contingent on a student's passing any external certification or licensing examination.

## Graduate Program Time Limits

A master's student has five calendar years from the date of first registration in the master's program to complete the master's degree (e.g., if the date of first registration is June 2025, the five-year time limit expires August 2030). Reapplication is required to continue pursuit of the degree if the five-year limit expires.

## Masters of Clinical Laboratory Science Leave of Absence (LOA) Policy

Within the five-year limit, a MCLS student in good academic standing may request a leave of absence (LOA) for a definite, stated period of time (up to one year) during which the student does not plan to make academic progress. To be eligible for a LOA, a student must not have received an extension of the time limit for the degree, and must not have temporary grades of IN or AB on course work taken.

- *North Carolina Residency Status:* North Carolina residency status may be affected by a student's actions during a LOA. Students may be required to submit documentation on return from leave to re-determine residency status.
- *University ONYEN:* Students who are not registered at UNC for one semester or longer will need to be reinstated and reactivate their ONYEN.
- *Policies:* Students will be expected to comply with University and CLS policies in effect at the time of their return to the curriculum.
- *Course Registration:* It is possible that students will not be allowed to re-enroll when planned, if space is not available.
- *Graduation Requirements:* Students will be expected to comply with the graduation requirements in effect when they return to the curriculum.
- *Limits:* The LOA will not extend the 5-year limit for program completion. Students will only be granted one LOA during the MCLS program.

## Procedure to Request Leave of Absence

In advance of the leave period, the MCLS student must request a leave of absence with a letter or email to the [Division Director](#). The letter should state the student's plans for returning to the program. The Director of the Division of Clinical Laboratory Science must approve this request.

## Student Responsibilities

- *Before LOA:* Students must submit a request for leave of absence by March 1 for the Fall term, November 1 for the Spring term, and February 1 for the Summer term.
- *During LOA:* Students on LOA are responsible for notifying the CLS Program of changes of mailing address, phone number and/or email address and updating contact information in Connect Carolina.
- *Extending LOA:* A student who originally requests a LOA of less than one year may submit one revised request to extend the LOA. This request should be submitted as soon as possible, but will not be accepted later than the deadlines stated below for confirming intent to return. The maximum duration of LOA, including extension, may not exceed one year.
- *Return from LOA:* Students must confirm their intent to return from LOA with a letter or email to the Director of the Division of CLS by March 1 for the Fall term, November 1 for the Spring term, and February 1 for the Summer term.
- *Update Plan of Study:* Along with confirming intent to return, students must submit a revised plan of study to their faculty advisor indicating new expected dates for course completion. Revised plans of study must be submitted by March 15 for the Fall term, November 15 for the Spring term, and February 15 for the Summer term.

## Student Performance of Laboratory Tests

After demonstrating competency, students may be permitted, with qualified supervision, to perform procedures in the clinical laboratory. All results of procedures performed by students must be verified by facility employees.

## Student Employees/Service Work

Students may be given the opportunity to work in the clinical laboratory in the evenings or on weekends. Working in a clinical laboratory outside of regular academic hours is noncompulsory for students. These opportunities are optional, and students are considered employees of the institution during these hours.

While in clinical rotations, CLS students are **not** considered employees of the institution, even if they work there at other times. Students are not entitled to any compensation, employee benefits, or worker's compensation while participating in the clinical education experience. Any employee access to computer systems, etc. must not be utilized while participating in the clinical education experience.

International students may need authorization to work and should consult UNC's International Student and Scholar Services for information at: <https://iss.unc.edu/student-employment/on-campus/>, via email: <mailto:iss@unc.edu> or phone: 919-962-5661. *Employment positions at UNC Hospitals do not qualify for on-campus employment.*

## Students with Disabilities

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability, or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities.

All accommodations are coordinated through the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC). Please visit the [EOC's Accommodations website](#), call 919-962-8300, or email [accessibility@unc.edu](mailto:accessibility@unc.edu). Please contact EOC as soon as possible if you think there is any possibility that you will need accommodations. The evaluation process can take time, and accommodations cannot be applied to any work completed before the accommodation is approved. It is better to have the accommodation and not need it than to need it and not have it.

Students in the CLS and MCLS-MLS programs must be able to perform essential functions, either with or without reasonable accommodation, in order to complete the requirements of the programs. (Click to review [essential functions for CLS](#) and [essential functions for MCLS-MLS](#).)

## Students Infected with HBV, HCV, and/or HIV

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has a policy concerning health care personnel who are infected with hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, and/or human immunodeficiency virus. This policy is relevant to students seeking careers in health care who are or become infected with HBV, HCV, and/or HIV. Infected students are encouraged to [read the policy](#) and to set up an appointment at [Campus Health](#) to discuss any necessary modifications to practice.

## Malpractice Liability Insurance

Students enrolled in the School of Medicine, including those in the Department of Health Sciences, are covered under the University's self-insurance plan for malpractice liability. This insurance is provided

at no cost to the student. This coverage is only for incidents resulting from University-related activities. There is no coverage for outside activities, either paid or volunteer.

## Students with Concerns about Mistreatment or Learning Environment

Any allegations of or concerns regarding student mistreatment or discrimination should be reported according to the School of Medicine [Learning Environment and Student Mistreatment Policy](#). [More information and link to submit a concern](#). (Note: links updated 28 Jan 2026)

## Academic Advising

The Director of the Division of Clinical Laboratory Science serves as the Program Director and academic advisor for students in the undergraduate CLS program. Students should [contact the Division Director](#) for questions related to registration, academic progress, and graduation. Students may also contact any faculty member in the Division of Clinical Laboratory Science for academic or career advice.

Each student in the MCLS-MLS program will have an assigned faculty advisor. The student and advisor will meet on a regular basis to evaluate the student's plan of study and progress toward the degree. The advisor must approve all elective courses and the student's Capstone project proposal. (The project proposal must be submitted and approved one semester before enrollment in the first Capstone course. The student and advisor will agree on the specific due date of the proposal.)

## Administrative Personnel

The CLS division director serves as the program director for the CLS undergraduate and master's degree programs and is responsible for the organization, administration, instruction, evaluation, continuous quality improvement, curriculum planning and development, direction of faculty and staff, program accreditation, and general effectiveness of the programs. The Division Director reports to the chair of the Department of Health Sciences, who also serves as a senior associate dean in the UNC School of Medicine and reports to the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, who in turn reports to the School's Chief Academic Officer. The Dean of the School of Medicine serves as a Vice Chancellor of the University.

### Line of Administrative Authority

| Title/Role  | Name                  | Contact  |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| Chancellor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill             | Lee Roberts           | lhrunc@email.unc.edu                                     |
| Dean, School of Medicine;<br>Vice Chancellor, Medical Affairs       | Wesley Burks*         | wburks@email.unc.edu                                     |
| Chief Academic Officer,<br>School of Medicine                       | Cristy Page*          | Cristy_page@med.unc.edu                                  |
| Vice Dean, Academic Affairs,<br>School of Medicine                  | Jennifer Wu           | Jennifer_wu@med.unc.edu                                  |
| Senior Associate Dean & Chair,<br>Department of Health Sciences     | Christopher Ingersoll | Christopher_ingersoll@med.unc.edu                        |
| Division Director, Program Director,<br>Clinical Laboratory Science | Tara Moon             | <a href="mailto:tmoon@med.unc.edu">tmoon@med.unc.edu</a> |

*\*Dr. Burks will step down as Dean of the School of Medicine in September 2025. At that time Dr. Page will assume the role as interim Dean until a formal search is completed.*

Administrative officers of the University, School of Medicine, and Department of Health Sciences have the authority and responsibility to carry out all policies and manage student affairs. In general, direct student support is delegated to offices such as the [Student Services](#) office within the Department of Health Sciences, or the [Dean of Students](#) office for all University students.



Additional information:

- [Department of Health Sciences Administration](#)
- [UNC School of Medicine Organizational Chart](#)
- [Administrative Officers of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#)

## Evaluation and Grading

Students in the Division of CLS are evaluated frequently and are encouraged to discuss any academic concerns with CLS faculty members. Students can schedule individual meetings with faculty at any time for guidance and support throughout the program. All students are evaluated according to the same standards and expectations for each course and throughout the program to ensure fairness, consistency, and equity in academic and professional development. Any student not making satisfactory progress at the midpoint of any course will receive notification. Students should make an appointment with the instructor(s) and/or the program director to discuss ways to improve or correct any deficiencies.

Professional attitudes and actions, as described in the professional objectives, are as important as traditional academic standards for students preparing to deliver a high standard of health care and service. A student may be judged unacceptable for continuation in their program when the student is deficient in either grades or professional behavior. Further information on academic and behavioral dismissals is discussed in the Clinical Laboratory Science dismissal policies, below.

CLS faculty and DHS staff follow [FERPA](#) regulations. All student records including grades, email communications, advising notes, and proceedings of grade review or professional performance review are stored in secure, access-controlled systems that have been approved by the University for the appropriate level of data security.

The following grading scale is used for undergraduate CLSC courses:

| Grade | Range       |
|-------|-------------|
| A     | 93 to 100   |
| A-    | 90 to 92.95 |
| B+    | 87 to 89.95 |
| B     | 83 to 86.95 |
| B-    | 80 to 82.95 |
| C+    | 77 to 79.95 |
| C     | 73 to 76.95 |
| C-    | 70 to 72.95 |
| D+    | 67 to 69.95 |
| D     | 60 to 66.95 |
| F     | ≤ 59.95     |

The following grading scale is used for graduate CLSC courses:

| Grade | Range     |
|-------|-----------|
| H     | 94 to 100 |
| P     | 80 to 93  |
| L     | 70 to 79  |
| F     | ≤ 69      |

Additional grade designations used in all CLSC courses include:

| Grade | Description            |
|-------|------------------------|
| IN    | Incomplete             |
| AB    | Absent from Final Exam |

**IN** - Used when the student took the final examination but did not complete some other course requirement, and the student could pass the course if the assignment were completed. *Note: In some clinical rotations, grades may not be available at the end of the semester because of the rotation*

*schedule. A student may receive a temporary grade of incomplete for the clinical course. The CLS faculty member directing the clinical course will change the temporary grade as soon as the final grade is available.*

**AB** - Must be given to a student who did not take a final exam regardless of the reason, but might have passed the course had they done so.

*It is very important to inform your instructor(s) immediately if you choose to drop a course or withdraw from the program!!! If you are not participating in the course discussions and work (and do not inform us of your intentions to drop or withdraw) you could receive an F\* on your transcript.*

### [Further explanation of UNC's Grading System](#)

## **Dismissal Policies**

### **Academic Dismissals/Remediation**

The CLS faculty reviews the academic record of all students at the end of each semester. Any student who has not met academic standards is considered for dismissal.

The academic standard for continuation in the undergraduate CLS program is a grade of C- (70%) or better in all courses. For master's degree students, the academic standard is a grade of P (80%) or better in all courses. (For elective courses using a different grading scale, the standard is 80% or better.) Any student who has earned a grade of F, or more than one grade of D, D+, or L, at any time during the program will be dismissed. If a student has earned one grade of D, D+, or L, and has satisfactory grades in all other courses in the curriculum, the faculty will consider whether the student will be dismissed or will have the option of remedial work.

The opportunity to undertake remedial work is a privilege and is not automatically granted. The following factors will be considered in determining whether a remedial option is possible:

1. The student's performance in all other courses.
2. The availability of the appropriate CLS faculty member to supervise and conduct the remedial work.
3. The availability of resources for laboratory courses.
4. The amount of time needed for the student to achieve competence.
5. The course sequence. For example, it may not be possible to correct a deficiency in a pre-requisite course before the next course in the sequence.

After considering these factors and the student's overall record, the faculty will decide whether a student who has earned one grade of D, D+, or L will be offered remediation or will be dismissed from the program.

The student will be informed of the faculty's decisions regarding dismissal or remediation by email and/or in writing. If the student chooses to undertake remedial work, the student must notify the CLS program director within ten calendar days of the receipt of the letter describing the remediation. The original course grade will not change as a result of this remedial work.

If remediation is deemed impossible, if the student chooses not to undertake remedial work, or if the remediation is not successfully completed within the specified period of time, the student will be dismissed from the program.

If a student wishes to appeal a course grade, the appeal must follow the ["Grade Appeals" policy](#) of the Department of Health Sciences. If a student wishes to appeal a dismissal decision based on grades, this appeal must also follow the ["Grade Appeals" policy](#) of the Department of Health Sciences. The student must pay careful attention to the deadlines specified in this policy.

## Professional Behavior Dismissals

Professional behavior, as described in the professional objectives, is extremely important for students preparing to enter a health care profession. CLS faculty members will document professional behavior problems on a Professional Performance Report form. Examples of problems that may be documented include: repeated absences, failure to prepare for laboratory courses or rotations, breach of patient confidentiality, failure to conform to the dress code, failure to follow safety regulations, failure to cooperate with clinical instructors, etc. Students will be notified that a Professional Performance Report form has been placed in their file, and they will have the opportunity to write comments on the form.

If a student demonstrates serious professional behavior problems, the CLS faculty will proceed according to the Department of Health Sciences [“Professional Behavior, Criminal Background Check, and Drug Testing Policy”](#). If a student wishes to appeal a dismissal decision based on professional behavior, the appeal must also follow the same policy. The student must pay careful attention to the deadlines specified in this policy.

## Attendance Policies

In general, the Division of Clinical Laboratory Science will follow the [official academic calendar](#) of the University. However, there may be exceptions, especially for students in clinical rotations. Any exceptions are communicated to students well in advance.

Students are expected to be present and on time for all scheduled classes, on-campus laboratory sessions, and clinical rotations; and to meet all deadlines in online courses. A student’s record of attendance and the way the student handles unexpected absences say a great deal about the student’s level of professionalism. The CLS professional objectives include: “Report to lecture, laboratory, and clinical courses on all scheduled days at assigned times. Fully participate in online courses, meeting all deadlines.” Students who fail to meet this objective risk dismissal from the program for deficiencies in professional behavior.

## Absences/Remediation

A student who is absent from any course remains responsible for all work missed. “Make-up” work or other means of mastering course objectives will be governed by individual course policies. (Most labs cannot be repeated.) In order to complete clinical laboratory objectives, absences and tardiness that occur during clinical rotations may require remedial action. The need for remedial action will be left to the discretion of the course director and the clinical coordinator in the corresponding laboratory. Time options for remedial work include: unscheduled days and/or weeks, second shift, weekends, breaks, vacation, schedule alterations and other alternatives at the clinical coordinator’s discretion. Failure to make up missed time will result in an incomplete for that rotation and possible deferment of the student’s degree.

## Notifications

In case of absence or tardiness, students must notify the Clinical Laboratory Science faculty in advance, or as soon as possible if an emergency precludes advance notice. Notification must be made to **all faculty** via <http://go.unc.edu/cls-attendance>. Students in clinical rotations must also call the clinical facility. For extended illnesses, documentation from a physician may be required. Students must include the faculty course director in any communication with clinical sites about makeup plans.

## Illness

Students who have symptoms suggesting risk of spreading illness to others in classes or clinical rotations must follow the current Health Clearance Protocol, which is posted on Canvas. Students may also call Campus Health directly (919-966-6573) for medical advice. If advised to stay home from class or clinic, students must [notify all instructors](#). Students are not required to share specific health information in this notification. This is consistent with the CLS professional objective to “promote and protect public health at all times”.

## Severe Weather

Student safety is a priority. No student will be required to attend class in unsafe conditions.

If the University cancels classes under its adverse weather policy, all on-campus CLS classes and clinical rotations are cancelled. It is possible that local adverse weather will affect faculty or students even when the University has **not** cancelled classes. In this case:

- CLS faculty members will communicate any changes to on-campus classes via Canvas and/or email.
- If local weather prevents you from traveling safely to or from your class or rotation, [notify CLS faculty](#) and call the clinical facility, if applicable, as for any other absence. During rotations, if you are able to travel safely but the facility is potentially experiencing staff shortages due to weather conditions, contact the clinical facility to determine the clinical coordinator's preference for your attendance that day. Don't forget to include the faculty course director in any communication with clinical sites about makeup plans.

An absence due to weather is like any other absence in regard to your responsibility for work missed/mastering course objectives.

## Safety in the Profession of Clinical Laboratory Science

You are preparing to enter a profession that has many rewards and opportunities for personal growth. As in many health care professions, however, there are risks in clinical laboratory science and it is important to be aware of those risks. When dealing with patients and patients' samples, there is a risk of exposure to infectious agents and, in performing some laboratory testing, there is a risk of exposure to toxic chemicals and other hazards. Because of the risks involved in this profession, the Division of Clinical Laboratory Science provides each student who will participate in student and/or clinical laboratory courses with extensive safety instruction, which must be completed annually. We also make sure that the clinical laboratory settings provide appropriate safety equipment and procedures so that unnecessary risk is avoided. We will provide instructions for appropriate care in the event of an accident in the laboratory.

**Your safety is always your responsibility.** You must take the initiative to learn and follow the safety procedures you are taught. If you have any questions about safety procedures or the availability of appropriate protective equipment, notify your instructor, clinical coordinator, or course director immediately.

## Infectious Agents/Communicable Diseases

Infections and communicable diseases are common in health care delivery settings and may pose a threat to students participating in clinical activities as part of their education. During the performance of clinical activities, you may have contact with patients or other individuals who have AIDS (HIV), Tuberculosis (TB), Hepatitis, COVID-19, and other communicable illnesses. Although rare when proper preventive measures are used, this contact may result in exposure to infectious agents. If you have a

potential exposure to an infectious agent, you should contact your personal physician, Campus Health (919-966-6573), or an urgent care provider and follow their instructions/guidance.

### **Tuberculosis and Fit-Tested Masks**

In your clinical rotations, you will not be going into rooms where there are cases of known TB because you have not been fitted for a respirator. If the instructor you are with is wearing a special fit-tested mask (N95 respirator) for a procedure, then you should not participate.

### **Radiation Safety**

The use of radiation or radioactive materials in clinical laboratories is very limited. CLS students do not complete radiation safety training and are not issued a film badge to monitor radiation exposure, therefore students should not participate in any procedural steps involving radiation or direct handling of radionucleotides. Rarely, clinical laboratories may receive samples from patients receiving high dose radiation treatment. These samples are clearly labeled and should not be handled by students. For more information, go to the [UNC Environmental Health and Safety website](#) and click on “Safety Manuals” and then “Radiation”.

### **Student Laboratory Rules**

1. All students must complete and document safety training prior to working in the student lab. Students are expected to follow all guidelines in the safety training materials on fire, electrical, chemical, and biological safety.
2. Students are responsible for locating and being familiar with the operation of the safety equipment in the student lab. Remember, when necessary, the eye wash and safety shower should be used for at least 15 minutes.
3. Students must wear closed-toed, non-perforated shoes in the laboratory. Dresses and skirts must be at least knee-length and pants must be at least mid-calf, and must be free of holes or perforations (e.g., mesh inserts). Shorts and miniskirts are not permitted in the laboratory. Long hair must be tied back, and hats should not be worn. Care must be exercised to keep hair, clothing, jewelry, etc. away from laboratory equipment.
4. Any breaks of the skin on the hands or wrists must be bandaged before putting on gloves.
5. Standard (Universal) precautions require you to consider every specimen to be potentially infectious. Personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided to minimize risk to students. Students will be instructed on appropriate use and handling of all PPE, including decontamination of reusable PPE.
  - Lab Coats must be worn and closed (i.e., buttoned) when performing laboratory work. If you have a significant spill on your lab coat, remove it immediately and inform the lab instructor. The instructor and student laboratory manager will handle laundering of the soiled coat and assist you with a clean coat to wear.
  - Gloves are required when handling specimens, cleaning laboratory equipment and work area, and cleaning up spills. If you find yourself sensitive to gloves, please inform the instructors and alternate gloves and/or liners will be provided for you. Gloves must be replaced whenever torn or soiled with blood or body fluids. Hands must be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds immediately after removing gloves. When removing gloves, grasp the cuff of the glove and pull the glove off inside out. Avoid touching skin with the glove's outer surface. Never wash and reuse disposable gloves.
  - Other PPE such as safety glasses, goggles, face shields, and bench shields are available and must be used when appropriate, e.g., when there is reasonable anticipation of aerosol formation or a splash occurring. (Students will be instructed regarding the appropriate PPE for each procedure.) Prescription eyewear such as glasses and contact lenses is **not** protective. Reusable PPE must be cleaned/disinfected after every use. When donning or removing safety glasses, goggles, or face shields, be aware of potential contamination! Use a clean paper towel and handle by the side arms or

- headband. When not in use, place on a paper towel on your bench away from your immediate work area.
- Face masks or other PPE currently being required by UNC Health for their clinical laboratory employees will also be made available in the student laboratory. Students are encouraged to utilize this PPE so that they will be prepared to work in the clinical laboratory with additional protective equipment. Students will be instructed on safe handling of masks.
6. Lab coats, gloves, and other PPE must not be worn outside the laboratory. Remove PPE and wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before leaving for any reason.
  7. Do not remove specimens, reagents, or equipment from the laboratory. This includes writing utensils, calculators, and rulers used in the lab.
  8. Avoid touching your face with gloves and do not put **anything** in your mouth. No mouth pipetting! No eating, drinking, smoking, gum chewing, manipulating contact lenses, or application of cosmetics is permitted in the laboratory.
  9. Any spills must be cleaned up according to instructions given during safety training. Instructors are available for guidance in cleaning up spills. Do not clean up broken glass with unprotected hands. Use puncture resistant gloves and tongs, forceps, or brush/dustpan. Any spills of blood or body fluids must be disinfected with 10% bleach solution or bleach-containing wipes. Check the expiration of the 10% bleach solution. It is stable for 30 days after preparation.
  10. Dispose of all lab materials as instructed. All contaminated disposable items must be placed into designated biohazard containers. Contaminated sharps must be placed into designated puncture-proof containers.
  11. Contaminated needles or other sharps must not be sheared, bent, recapped, or removed from syringes or other devices.
  12. Do not open the lid of a centrifuge when it is in motion. Ensure that the centrifuge is properly balanced, and that tubes are free from visible defects prior to use. Do not centrifuge uncovered specimens. Cover with stoppers, parafilm or caps. The exceptions are urine and specimens requiring frequent manipulation during a series of centrifugations (e.g., Ab/Ag testing).
  13. If a spill occurs in a centrifuge, turn it off and unplug it. If the spill possibly contains organisms infectious by aerosol route, allow 30-60 minutes to permit settling of aerosols if possible. Wear a faceshield and gloves when opening the centrifuge, and clean up the spill according to instructions given during safety training. Instructors are available for guidance.
  14. Any injury sustained in the laboratory must be reported to the instructor immediately and an [incident report](#) completed.
  15. At the end of each laboratory session, while still wearing gloves and lab coat, turn off and disinfect equipment according to instructions. Any non-disposable supplies which may have been contaminated (test tube racks, glassware, etc.) must also be disinfected. Disinfect the cleared work area. Remove PPE and wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after disinfecting the bench.
  16. No personal items are allowed in the lab, except that clean storage within the laboratory is provided for personal cell phones. A closet is provided for storage of other personal items, or you may use your locker. Bring only your lab manual (if applicable) and any assigned texts to class.
  17. All work performed in the laboratory is governed by the honor code. Work must be done independently unless otherwise instructed. All results generated must be immediately recorded in ink on the laboratory worksheet. Any mistaken results must be corrected by drawing a single line through the error, writing in the correct answer, and initialing the change.
  18. Use of the laboratory is limited to designated lab hours when proper supervision is available. Visitors are not allowed in the student laboratory.

## Dress Code

In the student laboratory, all students must adhere to the Student Laboratory Rules above, which include guidelines for dress. These guidelines are designed for the students' safety and professional



development. Any student who does not follow these guidelines may be asked to leave and return in the appropriate dress.

Guidelines for professional attire in the clinical laboratory require consideration for patients, visitors, and coworkers as well as personal safety. Therefore, when in clinical rotations, or when visiting the hospital laboratory as part of a laboratory activity, students are expected to promote a professional image by following these guidelines:

1. Clothes must be clean and neat. Extremes in dress style should be avoided. Dresses and skirts must be at least knee-length and pants must be at least mid-calf\*. Casual or athletic wear such as leggings, sweat suits or warm-up pants are not acceptable. Scrub suits are acceptable.

*\*In addition to these basic guidelines, students are expected to follow any additional provisions of the facility's dress code. For example, [UNC Medical Center's Professional Business Attire policy](#) specifies that pants must be ankle-length. Jeans or any type of clothing made from denim of any color may **not** be worn. T-shirts may only be worn under scrub tops or collared shirts. Also please note that if scrubs are worn when in rotation at UNC Medical Center, scrub tops must be "Grape" in color and scrub pants must be black.*

2. Closed toe shoes only. No spiked heels or high platform heels.
3. Your UNC Health identification badge must be worn while in rotation at any facility unless you have been issued an identification badge by that facility. Badges should be worn at chest level or above, with name and photo clearly visible at all times.
4. A clean laboratory coat must be worn when performing laboratory work. Additional PPE must be worn as appropriate for each task, and/or in compliance with facility policy.
5. Keep jewelry, perfume or shaving lotion, or scents found in other products to a minimum.
6. When there is any direct patient contact (i.e., when performing phlebotomy) in any area, inpatient or outpatient, students are prohibited from wearing artificial nails, including artificial tips or attachments, gel nails, silicone nails, silk wraps, acrylic nails, and nail jewelry.
7. No headphones or hats.
8. Long hair should be tied back.

Any student who does not follow these guidelines may be asked to leave and return in the appropriate dress.

### **Lab Coats and other PPE**

In general, the Division of Clinical Laboratory Science will provide necessary PPE for activities in the student laboratory, and clinical affiliates will provide necessary PPE for clinical rotations. However, there may be occasions when suitable PPE is not available, and students may need to purchase an item such as a disposable lab coat. The [CLS Safety Coordinator \(Mrs. Stewart\)](#) can assist you with ordering information for appropriate PPE. Infection control guidelines state that potentially-contaminated PPE should not be taken out of the laboratory area. Disposable PPE must be discarded at the end of a rotation or when no longer needed. You may want to carry an extra clean coat with you, in case yours is soiled and must be discarded.

### **Incident Policy**

In the event of a laboratory accident involving a student, the following steps must be followed:

1. The student must immediately notify the laboratory instructor and/or clinical coordinator of the accident. The instructor will assist the student with first aid for the injury, and in determining whether any medical attention beyond first aid is required.
2. The student must complete a Division of Clinical Laboratory Science [incident report](#), with the help of the laboratory instructor. (<http://go.unc.edu/cls-incident>)

3. If emergency care is needed, students should be referred to the nearest emergency room or urgent care clinic, as appropriate.
4. If the accident involves a potential blood-borne pathogen exposure, the instructor and/ or clinical coordinator should help the student obtain source patient information and coordinate source patient testing according to facility protocols in place for employees. Students in clinical rotation should be directed to the facility's Occupational Health Clinic (OHC) for advice regarding any baseline testing and/ or post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) that may be needed. If the student is not in a clinical rotation (i.e., student laboratory), or if the facility's OHC is unable to assist, the student should be directed to the nearest medical clinic. The student should notify the clinic that they have had a potential blood-borne pathogen exposure and need to be evaluated by someone who can advise them appropriately regarding baseline testing and need for PEP.  
More information about first aid for blood-borne pathogen exposures, information needed for the source patient, baseline testing, and post-exposure prophylaxis are available on Campus Health's website under [Urgent Needs](#).
5. Medical personnel will provide treatment of the injury and appropriate follow-up. It is the responsibility of the treating provider to determine what medical treatment is appropriate.
6. The Clinical Laboratory Science safety coordinator (Mrs. Stewart) will maintain records of incident reports.

## **Emergency Care**

Students who need first aid or emergency medical care for an illness or incident that occurs while performing rotation-related responsibilities may obtain care, at their own expense, at any local urgent care center or emergency room. [UNC Campus Health](#) is available to students within driving distance and offers [same day care](#) for urgent needs. Any student may call 919-966-2281 to speak with a registered nurse about their illness or injury.

## **Laboratory Visitation**

For safety reasons, visitors are not permitted in the student or clinical laboratories.

## **Release for Recommendations**

For Clinical Laboratory Science faculty to write letters of recommendation, students must complete the "Consent for Release of Information from Education Records" form. Students' permission is voluntary and may be revoked at any time in writing. However, without this permission form we can make no statements concerning your performance. You may designate all Clinical Laboratory Science faculty or specific faculty members as authorized individuals. This form will be kept in your Clinical Laboratory Science file.

## **Telephone Communications**

Cell phones must be turned off and put away during lecture and student laboratory courses. Do not leave class to make or answer a phone call. Cell phones must not be brought into the clinical laboratories. Students should store phones along with other personal belongings in lockers provided. The CLS student services number (919-966-8803) may be used as emergency contact information. Emergency messages will be relayed. Clinical laboratory contact numbers (see course syllabi) may also be used for emergencies.