

UCSF CLS Training Program

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. About the CLS Profession and the UCSF Training Program

What is a clinical laboratory scientist (CLS)?

- Clinical laboratory scientists (CLS) have completed a bachelor's degree and passed a State of California licensing exam that qualifies them to work in a clinical laboratory. CLS work with state-of-the-art equipment to analyze patient samples, perform clinical testing, and reporting results to physicians. It is estimated that 70 to 80 percent of all decisions about a patient's diagnosis and treatment are influenced by laboratory test results.
- Clinical laboratory scientists collaborate very closely with physicians in diagnosing and monitoring disease processes, as well as monitoring the effectiveness of therapy. Areas of clinical laboratory training include microbiology, chemistry, hematology, urinalysis/body fluids, immunology, transfusion medicine, toxicology, and molecular diagnostics.

What does the UCSF CLS training program entail?

- The UCSF CLS training program will include reading assignments, didactic lectures, case studies simulating real lab result situations, pictures of cells/organisms, and hands-on clinical rotations in hematology, urinalysis/body fluids, clinical chemistry, immunology/serology, clinical microbiology, molecular diagnostics, cytogenetics, and transfusion medicine.

Is the UCSF CLS Training Program NAACLS accredited?

- The training program offered by UCSF clinical laboratories is approved by the State of California Department of Public Health/ Laboratory Field Services only. In other words, completing our training program will allow trainees to obtain California Licensure as a Clinical Laboratory Scientist.

What is the career outlook for the graduates of the CLS training program?

- There is currently a National and State shortage of qualified clinical laboratory scientists. The Bureau of Labor Statistics states that medical/clinical laboratory science positions exhibit faster than average employment growth and forecast excellent job opportunities.
- At UCSF clinical laboratories, ambitious clinical laboratory scientists can advance into more responsible positions such as method development, technical specialists, education, quality assurance, and management.

2. Eligibility and Prerequisites

What are the prerequisites for entry into the UCSF CLS training program?

- Applicants must demonstrate an overall academic GPA of 2.5 or higher on a 4.0-point scale. They must also attain a minimum of 3.0 overall for the required prerequisite courses. The required prerequisite courses are:

Biological sciences (18 semester units or equivalent quarter units) including:

- Medical (clinical/pathogenic) Microbiology (with lab preferred)
- Immunology
- Hematology (with lab preferred)

Chemistry (16 semester units or equivalent quarter units) including:

- Biochemistry
- Analytical/quantitative analysis or clinical chemistry
 - Note: If you have taken Chemistry 2 ABC as a series at UC Davis, you will receive credit for meeting the academic requirement for Analytical/quantitative Chemistry by CDPH/LFS.

Physics (3 semester units or equivalent quarter units):

- Physics must include instructions in the principles of light and electricity (this course is usually second-semester college physics or a part of a series of three-quarter courses of physics).

Recommended Courses are:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| • Hematology Lab | • Genetics |
| • Medical Micro Lab | • Statistics |
| • Immunology Lab | • Parasitology |
| • Clinical Chemistry Lab | • Mycology |
| • Molecular biology | • Virology |

Can my prerequisite courses expire?

- Yes. For the UCSF CLS Training Program, the required prerequisite courses must be completed within 5 years of application.

Note: When considering any prerequisite course taken during undergrad, we apply the 5-year expiration date after the date your degree was awarded.

Who dictates the academic requirements of the CLS training program?

- Our academic requirements align with the California Department of Public Health/ Laboratory Field Services (CDPH/LFS) requirements for the CLS Generalist Trainee License.

Can I still apply if one or more of my required prerequisite courses are in progress?*

- Yes, however, your application will not meet the minimum requirements if an official transcript showing the completion of the required course is not submitted by the deadline.
- We strongly recommend waiting to apply until after you have completed the course, and it is reflected on an official transcript.

What are the qualities of applicants the UCSF training program seeks?

- Previous experience of successful trainees of clinical laboratory science candidates showed they possessed the following general characteristics:
 - Aptitude for the basic sciences, computers, and laboratory instrumentation
 - Ability to work quickly and efficiently
 - Precise and thorough
 - Work well under pressure
 - Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
 - Excellent written and oral communication skills
 - Ability to work well in a team

How do you evaluate applicants?

- We utilize a holistic approach to our admissions process, meaning all application materials are considered when making an admissions decision. This includes grades for required and recommended courses, overall academic history, letters of recommendation, and prior work experience, to name a few.

Is lab experience required?

- We do not require applicants to have prior lab experience. However, due to the competitive nature of applicant pools, gaining clinical lab experience can be beneficial. It may also help develop practical skills and provide valuable insight into the field.

Are international students eligible for the program?

- The UCSF CLS Training program does not accept students with F, H, or other temporary visas. Applicants must possess legal residency or the right to stay in the U.S. for the duration of the training program.

3. Application Process

When can I apply?

- Our application cycles are:
 - March Class: July 1- Last Friday of August the prior year
 - September Class: April 1 - Last Friday of May the same year

How many times can I apply?

- You are only allowed to apply 3 times. A new application fee and application form must be submitted for each additional attempt.
- Any documents (Letters of recommendation, official transcripts, etc.) received during previous application cycles will be saved for 2 years and can be applied to subsequent application cycles.

What documents are required to complete an application?*

Required Documents:

- Completed Application Form
- Application Fee
- 3 Letters of Recommendation.
- Official transcripts from all colleges/universities listed in the application.
- Updated Resume

Additional/Supporting Documents:

- Copy of CLS Trainee License, if available.

IMPORTANT: An application packet will not be processed or reviewed until an **application fee** and **application form** are received for the application cycle.

What is the application fee?*

- **Fee Amount:** \$80 (non-refundable)
- **Accepted Payment Methods:** Check, money order, or cashier's check.
- **Check Payment Instructions:**
 1. Pay to the Order of "UC Regents"
 2. Memo: Applicant's full name and class applying for (e.g., SMITH-MAR2025, SMITH-SEPT2025)
 3. Signature: Ensure the check is signed.
 4. Mail To:

UCSF-Health Clinical Lab

Attn: Shaun Arevalo

185 Berry Street, Suite 290

San Francisco, CA 94107

Should I email or mail in my application?*

- Sending application documents via email is the preferred method. However, if it is not possible to send via email (i.e. application fee, international transcripts, etc.) mailing is acceptable. See below.

Application Fee	Mail to: UCSF-Health Clinical Lab Attn: Shaun Arevalo 185 Berry Street, Suite 290 San Francisco, CA 94107
Application Form	Email to: shaun.arevalo@ucsf.edu
Official Transcripts	
Other Supporting Documents	

Note: It is OK to send application documents at different times. All received documents are kept on file for up to 2 years.

- Letters of Recommendation must be sent from the recommender. It is the applicant's responsibility to request that their references be sent to the Program Coordinator.

What does the application process entail?*

- When an application and application fee are received, an **application packet** is started.
 - All documents received are collected and filed in your application packet.
- At the end of the application cycle, **completed application packets** are sent to the review committee.
- The committee reviews the application for academic eligibility.

- **Eligible applications** are then evaluated and scored based on the completion of the required/recommended courses, grades, personal statements, and letters of recommendation.
- **A select number of eligible applicants** meeting the minimum requirements will be invited for an **on-site lab tour and skill assessment**.
- Based on cumulative scores, **the highest-ranking candidates** will be invited for an **interview panel with clinical lab supervisory staff**.
- All applicants will be notified of their final application status.

When/What is the lab tour?

- A select number of applicants who meet the minimum requirements may be invited to an on-site Lab Tour, which is typically held 2–3 weeks after the close of the application cycle (mid-June and mid-September). If invited, attendance is mandatory. The program director will provide the time and location to selected applicants.

How many students are accepted each session?

- Since the UCSF Clinical Lab started the program in March 2018, we have generally accepted 2-4 trainees for both March and September classes.

How long will it take to get notified of my application status?*

- After you apply, you will receive a notification one week before the application cycle closes, informing you whether your application is complete and will be forwarded to the review committee, or is incomplete.
- If you are notified that your application is incomplete, we will specify what document(s) is/are missing.

Note: No application or application document will be reviewed prior to the close of the application cycle.

4. Admission Requirements and Program Logistics

Do I need to complete the background check?

- Yes. All admitted trainees must complete a background check as part of the admissions process. The UCSF HR department will provide any necessary documents/forms to conduct the background check.

Do I have to pay for the required texts?

- You are responsible for the cost of the required texts that are necessary for the training. However, some sections have textbooks to borrow during your rotation, and some books are available electronically during the training year.

Do I need to purchase specific supplies for the UCSF training program?

- Each student must have a personal laptop as a studying platform. At the program's start, your computer will be set up during lab orientation to access the secured UCSF network.

Can trainees work while attending the CLS training program?

- Training is eight hours per day, Monday through Friday. The students who have worked have expressed that it was challenging to keep up with the training and work.
- We strongly recommend against working during the program. However, if work is necessary, trainees cannot concurrently be employed at UCSF.

Is there a tuition requirement for the training program?

- There is no tuition requirement for this training. We will offer monthly compensation to admitted trainees. The amount of compensation is non-negotiable and based on current minimum wage rates.

Is financial aid available?

- No, the UCSF CLS Training program is a clinical laboratory-based program, not academic-based. Therefore, financial aid is not available to our trainees.

Are Medical and Liability Insurance available?

- UCSF Provides Medical and Liability Insurance for all accepted CLS Trainees.