VA Hines Hospital and Clinical Facilities

Hospital

- Dedicated in 1921 to serve returning war veterans
- Highly affiliated tertiary care referral center operating 483 beds
- Over 700,000 patient visits per year, providing care to 57,000 veterans
- Extensive research program with over 175 investigators, 550 on-going projects and an estimated budget of $22 million
- Affiliated with 70 colleges & universities for the education of graduate & undergraduate students in associated health professions and occupations
- Specialty clinical programs which include Blind Rehabilitation, Spinal Cord Injury, Cardiovascular Surgery and Residential Care
- Accredited by the Joint Commission
- Serves as VISN 12 southern tier hub for Pathology, Radiology, Radiation Therapy and Fiscal & Human Resource services

Clinical Laboratory

- Staffed with over 100 technical and professional personnel
- Accredited by the Joint Commission and the Food and Drug Administration
- Equipped with state of the art clinical instrumentation and a sophisticated interfaced computer information system
- Full service core laboratory including stat, reference, routine and special testing
- Integrated Pathology residency program
- Performs more than 2.1 million diagnostic tests per year

Medical Laboratory Science (Medical Technology/Clinical Laboratory Science) Program

- Established in l974
- Accredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS), 5600 N. River Road, Suite 720, Rosemont, IL 60018, 773-714-8880
- Offers a 11-month clinical education program beginning the first week of August
- Graduates are eligible to take certifying examinations offered by the ASCP Board of Certification or any other approved certifying agency
- Program graduates have achieved a 100% pass rate on the ASCP Board of Certification exam over the past 3 years (2021 through 2023)
- 100% of students who started the Program over the past 3 years successfully completed it (2021 through 2023); all have been successful in finding jobs at competitive salaries within 3 months of graduation

Curriculum

Prerequisites

A student must have completed at least 90 semester hours (or equivalent) accepted by our affiliated universities and must be approved for application by that university. Alternatively, the student may have a baccalaureate degree and thus be eligible for application within seven years. If more than seven years have elapsed, academic preparation **must** be updated. Prerequisite courses include **chemistry** (l6 semester hours including organic or biochemistry); **biology** (l6 semester hours including microbiology and immunology); **mathematics** (l semester of college level math); **physics and statistics** are recommended.

Coursework

All science courses at Hines have a didactic and a practical component; this enables the student to learn the theory of procedures, gain experience in performing those procedures, and make clinical correlations from the laboratory data which is generated. The student will learn a wide variety of procedures and will be expected to become proficient in the performance and understanding of all commonly performed laboratory procedures.

Clinical Chemistry I (5 hours)
Theory and practice of analytical biochemistry as applied to pathologic states, methodology and instrumentation. Statistics are applied to reagent preparation, result determination and quality control. Includes clinical significance.

Clinical Chemistry II (3 hours)
Theory & practice of analytical biochemistry as applied to specialized tests for drugs, endocrine function and blood gas analysis. The relation of clinical testing, including Molecular Biology techniques, to disease states is also included.

Clinical Hematology (5 hours)
Study of the origin, development, morphology, physiology, & pathophysiology of the formed elements of the blood and bone marrow. Manual & automated methods of cell counting, differentiation & other special hematological procedures on blood & body fluids used in disease diagnosis.

Clinical Hemostasis (2 hour)
Study of the platelet, vascular, coagulation, & fibrinolytic systems. Testing procedures & the application of the principles of hemostasis as related to disease states & therapeutic monitoring are also included.

Clinical Immunohematology (4 hours)
Study of red cell antigen-antibody systems, antibody screening & identification, compatibility testing & immunopathologic conditions. Also included are donor requirements & blood component preparation & hemotherapy.

Clinical Immunology (3 hours)
Study of the principles of the protective & adversive aspects of the cellular & humoral immune responses, theory & performance of test procedures based on antigen-antibody reactions & clinical significance of test results are included.

Clinical Microbiology I (6 hours)
Theory and practice of the isolation and identification of pathogenic bacteria and mycobacteria in clinical specimens through cultures, morphology, biochemical and/or serological reactions and their drug susceptibility. The relation of clinical testing to disease states is also included.

Clinical Microbiology II (1 hour)
Theory and practice of the isolation and identification of fungi, parasites and viruses utilizing morphological, cultural, biochemical and serological methods. The relation of clinical testing to disease states and epidemiology as it applies to microbiology is also included.

Clinical Microscopy (1-2 hours)
Theory and practice of biochemical analyses and microscopic examination of urine and other body fluids. Includes clinical significance of lab data.

Special Topics in Clinical Laboratory Science (l hour)
An overview of medical ethics, patient approach, the theory and practice of phlebotomy techniques, laboratory safety, applications of laboratory computer systems and independent clinical research and development. Management and Education may also be included in this course for some affiliate partners.

Clinical Management and Education (l hour)
An introduction to the principles and theory of management and education as related to the clinical laboratory. The special job responsibilities of the medical laboratory scientist in management and education are addressed.

***Course titles and hours may vary at affiliated colleges and universities.

Faculty

Primary Faculty:

- Sydney Alonzo, MLS(ASCP)^{cm} – Chemistry
- Rebekah Cassiday, MLS(ASCP)^{cm} – Hemostasis
- Alejandra Estrada, MPH,MLS(ASCP)^{cm} - Clinical Microscopy
- Lisa Houha-Olsen, MT(ASCP) – Mycology
- Frank Houston, MLS(ASCP)^{cm} – Immunology
- Sue In, MT(ASCP) – Hematology, Clinical Microscopy
- Matthew Kardosh, MLS(ASCP)^{cm} - Immunology
- Jessica Kendall, MLS(ASCP)^{cm} – Immunohematology
- Beth Marcum, MLS(ASCP)^{cm} – Chemistry
- Danielle O'Donnell, MLS(ASCP)^{cm} – Microbiology
- Monika Pociute, MLS(ASCP)^{cm}SH^{cm} – Hemostasis
- Brandi Teggelaar, MLS(ASCP)^{cm} – Molecular Diagnostics
- Carrie Carlson, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM} – Orientation, Education, Management

Application and Admission

*All completed application documents must be received by **December 1** for admission consideration into the 11 month program which commences the following August. Materials received after December 1st will not be accepted.*

For information or application contact:

Carrie Carlson, MS, MLS(ASCP)CM
Medical Laboratory Science Program
VA Hines Hospital
5000 South 5th Avenue
Pathology & Lab Medicine (113-School)
Hines, IL 60141-3030
Carrie.Carlson@ va.gov

Affiliation

The Program is affiliated with the following academic institutions: Benedictine University, Bradley University, Eastern Illinois University, Elmhurst University, Purdue University, St. Mary's University of Minnesota, University of St. Francis, University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh, University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, Western Illinois University & Winona State University. Students currently enrolled in the Medical Technology/Clinical Laboratory Science curriculum at one of these schools are eligible to complete their senior year at Hines. Applicants who already have a baccalaureate degree will also be considered, provided they meet the admission requirements. All policies relative to admission, fees, grading, dismissal, etc. are clearly stated and available upon request.

Admission

General Policy

The Myron E. Rubnitz, M.D. Medical Laboratory Science Program at the VA Hines Hospital, Hines, Illinois reserves the right to change conditions, provisions & requirements upon reasonable notice as may be necessary to maintain proper standards and objectives of the Program.
Each student must exhibit professional conduct, satisfactory progress in academic standing and practical achievement. The Program reserves the right to require, at any time, the removal of any student whose attitude, conduct, health, scholastic records or practical experience is not in harmony with the policies of the hospital or its best interests.

Application and Admission

A student must have completed at least 90 semester hours accepted by our affiliated universities, maintain good academic standing and be approved for application by that university. Alternatively, the student may have a baccalaureate degree and thus be eligible for application. Admission is competitive, with a limited number of student positions available annually. Attendance at an affiliated college or university or completion of prerequisite coursework does not guarantee a position.

Prerequisites

Chemistry
Sixteen (16) hours in Chemistry, including General Chemistry.

Specifications
1. 3 courses must include lab experience.
2. One course must be Organic Chemistry or Biochemistry.

Biology
Sixteen (16) hours in Biological Science, including General Biology or Zoology

Specifications
l. Must include Microbiology with laboratory component.
2. Must include Immunology course.
3. Content area in physiology (may be included in a general course).
4. 2 courses must include lab experience (includes Microbiology lab).

Mathematics
One college level course. Statistics is strongly encouraged.

The content of the Chemistry, Biology and Math courses acceptable towards meeting these requirements would be those applicable towards a major in those fields or in medical technology. Survey or remedial courses do not fulfill these prerequisites.

Any applicant who has attended an educational institution outside of the U.S. is required to submit a transcript evaluation verifying U.S. equivalency. Contact the ASCP Board of Certification (www.ascp.org) for information.

Files on all prospective applicants must be ***complete*** by December 1.

Our evaluation and ranking of prospective students will be made by the Admissions Committee, comprised of Program officials and faculty, on the basis of a personal interview (required), academic standing, academic background (considering coursework taken, withdrawals and repeats), previous experience, letters of reference and personal narrative. **Minimum GPA requirement is 2.75 on a 4.0 scale overall and in the sciences.** Students will be notified of acceptance status in January.

Preference points will be given to veterans and to those students from affiliated colleges or universities. Non-citizens will be considered for enrollment ***only*** in the absence of qualified American citizens. VA educational programs admit students in accordance with national non-discrimination policies. (USAJOBS Help Center | Equal employment opportunity policy)

Essential Functions

Essential functions represent the technical or non-academic requirements of the Program that all students must master to successfully participate in the Program. All students and, thereby, all applicants are expected to:

- Possess sufficient vision to easily recognize and read text, numbers and graphics in print and on monitor screens.
- Be able to discriminate patterns and colors in order to identify reagents, media, stained cell preparations and physical properties of various body fluids, as well as delineate fine details of cellular structure and morphology when using a microscope.
- Be able to read, write and communicate in the English language to facilitate effective communication with patients, physicians and all other members of the health care team.
- Possess enough hearing ability with or without auditory aids to understand the normal speaking voice and discern audible instrument alert signals and timing devices.
- Demonstrate sufficient manual dexterity to perform such required tasks as: performing phlebotomy safely and accurately; operating delicate instruments; manipulating tools; handling small containers of potentially biohazardous specimens utilizing sample measuring devices; adequately focusing and manipulating a microscope, and using a keyboard.
- Bend, reach, sit and be sufficiently mobile to traverse about the laboratory and hospital corridors, including patient rooms.
- Demonstrate sufficient psychological stability to effectively problem solve and to react effectively in stressful situations. Must be able to recognize emergency situations and take appropriate action. Be flexible, creative and adaptable to change.
- Use intellectual skills to calculate, interpret, analyze, reason, evaluate and explain data, solve problems, make critical judgements and initiate corrective action as necessary.

Academic Standards

Evaluation and Grading

Progress of all students is subject to periodic review & is based on test scores as well as evaluation of overall attitude & laboratory performance. Exams are administered during each lecture series & clinical rotation. Comprehensive examinations covering all combined material to date are given quarterly. Satisfactory performance on ***each*** of these evaluation instruments is necessary in order for the student to maintain on overall "satisfactory" rating. Behavioral objectives are available for all courses; criteria for grading of each course will be stated at the beginning of each course. Grades which appear on the student's official transcript will usually be reflective of combined didactic & laboratory performance; the relative emphasis placed on each component will also be stated at the beginning of each course. The following Grading System will generally be in use:

A - Outstanding competence (90-l00%)
B - Above satisfactory competence (80-89%)
C - Satisfactory competence (70-79%)

A "B" average is required for all laboratory rotations. A "C" average is required for all didactic courses.

Probation and Dismissal

Failure to achieve or progress to stated competencies in any given lecture series, clinical rotation or quarterly comprehensive examination may result in probation. Dismissal may ensue if these deficiencies are not corrected. ***Any evidence of dishonesty is grounds for immediate dismissal.***

Appeals Mechanism

The ordinary appeal process in the matter of academic or professional performance evaluation begins with the student and the instructor and Program Director. If further arbitration is deemed necessary by either party, the Laboratory Director will be involved. If resolution cannot be reached, a third and final step will include a neutral representative from the affiliating university and/or hospital.

Student Withdrawal

In the event that a student enrolled in the Program decides to withdraw, for academic or nonacademic reasons, this decision must be made in writing to the Program Director. If the student is enrolled in an affiliated university, he/she is responsible for contacting university officials directly regarding his/her decision to withdraw, & for investigating the refund of any tuition or fees paid directly to the university. Book rental agreements with the Program are not refundable; no refunds of Program tuition are applicable since the Program does not charge tuition.

Prerequisites for Graduation

Satisfactory completion of all didactic & clinical assignments is a prerequisite for the issuance of a certificate of graduation. Less than satisfactory grade average will result in loss of graduation; additional laboratory and/or didactic experience may be assigned at the discretion of the Program Director to assist in graduation. Satisfactory completion of a Comprehensive Examination covering ***all*** lecture and laboratory material is mandatory before a certificate of graduation and/or approval to take certifying examinations will be issued. If deficiencies occur in ***any*** areas of this final Comprehensive Examination, they must be corrected before the student will be allowed to graduate or challenge any national certification examination.

Certification

All graduates of the Myron E. Rubnitz M.D. Medical Laboratory Science Program are expected to take a certifying examination conducted by a nationally accepted and respected certifying agency. Graduation, however, is not contingent upon certification.

Student Personnel Policies

General

All enrolled students will receive a student manual at orientation. This manual details the Program curriculum, evaluation mechanisms, etc.

Appearance

Neatness, cleanliness and good taste in dress and conduct all contribute to your public image. Professional appearance and conduct coupled with professional competence are important attributes of a good medical laboratory scientist.

All clothing, laboratory coats, shoes, etc. shall be kept clean and tidy. At no time will blue jeans or shorts be allowed as acceptable attire. All items of clothing are to be within the limits of the Hospital dress code. (The written dress code will be distributed prior to the start of the Program.) Laboratory coats and other personal protective equipment will be provided and maintained by the Hospital. Student identification badges will be provided by the Hospital and are to be worn at all times.

Attendance

A. **General** Attendance at all lectures and practical assignments is mandatory, unless proven proficiency warrants advanced placement.

   Lectures are generally held for two hours daily; the remainder of the time is spent in the laboratory or in independent study.

   The ***usual*** tour of duty will be from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily, Monday through Friday. Schedules may fluctuate depending on the requirements of each section (i.e. classes may begin as early as 6:30 a.m. or conclude as late as 5:00 p.m.). Schedules are provided to the students in advance.

B. **Vacation** Four weeks of approved vacation will be scheduled for Thanksgiving and Winter and Spring breaks. Students whose performance is less than satisfactory may be prohibited from taking these scheduled vacations in order to correct their deficiencies.

C. **Holidays** Students will be granted time off for all major federal holidays.

D. **Sick Leave** Any time or activity which is missed due to illness may need to be made up at the discretion of the Program Director. If a student is ill, notification must be made to both the Program Director and the Clinical Instructor before 7:00 a.m. Proof of illness may be required.

E. **Personal Leave** If unusual circumstances arise throughout the course of the year, the student may request "Personal Leave." The decision to grant permission for such an absence will be a joint one, made by the Instructor and the Program Director. Work which would be missed by such absence must be completed in advance. Excused Leave will not be granted Student Seminar Weeks since that material is only presented once and there is no opportunity to make up the work.

F. **Excused Absences** Professional meetings, workshops or functions established by the affiliating colleges or universities may be considered excused absences and must be approved by the Program Director.

G. **Unexcused Absences** Unexcused absences may justify dismissal of the offending student.

Service Work Policy

A. The Medical Laboratory Science Program at Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital provides clinical and didactic education for enrolled students. The students are not to be utilized in place of regular laboratory staff. They are expected to participate in non-testing activities such as specimen preparation and computer entry under direct supervision as part of their clinical experience; however they are not used to replace other personnel in that function.

B. Students shall be allowed to participate in the laboratory routine once they have proven proficiency in an area by means of checklists and / or practical exams. Some of the laboratory objectives include the ability to organize and perform testing functions independently. Such independence serves to improve the student's technical skills and develop confidence in their abilities. At no time are students to generate laboratory results without the supervision of the instructor or other designated medical technologist. Students shall not be required to participate in laboratory duties outside of their regular tour of duty.

Expenses

A. **Application Fee** There is no fee required for application.

B. **Tuition** The Program does not charge tuition; however students may be responsible for payment of tuition to their affiliating colleges and universities. Grant, loan and scholarship availability is the sole responsibility of the student through their affiliated university. Information regarding scholarships from professioal organizations may be distributed from the Program if available. In the event a student withdraws or is dismissed from the Program, no refunds of tuition are applicable since there is no Program tuition charge. Tuition refunds from the affiliated university will follow university policy alone; students from affiliated universities are responsible to research policies with their respective academic institution prior to enrollment.

C. **Book Fees** All students are required to obtain their textbooks through our book rental/reciprocal purchase program at an approximate cost of $150 per year. Book fees are non-refundable and due before the Program begins.

Medical

A. Proof of good health must be exhibited by all students who are accepted into the Program, before the Program begins and at their cost. This proof will include a physical examination. Proof of immunity to Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella and Hepatitis B must be provided. All incoming students must provide documentation Tuberculosis screening. Failure to provide such proof may result in termination from the Program.

B. Federal government regulations mandate a drug free environment. All applicants for government positions may be randomly subject to screens for illegal drugs of abuse. Applicants who refuse to be tested will be denied entrance into VA training programs.

C. Emergency treatment will be available to the student through the hospital's Employee Health Service.

D. Students are strongly encouraged to obtain personal health insurance; ***there is no hospital group coverage available to the student.***

Liability Coverage

Students are protected against civil actions brought in any court seeking damages for personal injury, including death, arising from malpractice or negligence during the exercise of duties at Department of Veterans Affairs institutions or on VA assignment at offsite facilities while furnishing professional services.

Accreditation

This program is accredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences, 5600 N. River Road, Suite 720, Rosemont, Illinois 60018. Phone: (773) 714-8880.

Myron E. Rubnitz, M.D. Medical Laboratory Science Program
VA Hines Hospital
Hines, Illinois

General Application Procedure Checklist

- ❒ Print out and complete the Application Form. Please attach a list and brief description of any courses you plan to take which do not appear on your official transcript.

- ❒ Official transcripts from EACH of the colleges or universities you've attended, including junior or community colleges, must be sent directly to the Program at the address listed below. NOTE: Applicants who have attended an academic institution outside of the United States must have their foreign transcript evaluated by an outside evaluating agency. Contact the ASCP Board of Certification for a list of acceptable evaluation agencies.

- ❒ Print out the recommendation form that is included as the last page of the application. Make copies and distribute them to your references. Completed recommendations must be sent directly to the Program by your references or may be enclosed with your application IF they are in sealed envelopes.

- ❒ Return completed forms, including transcripts, to:

Carrie Carlson, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}
Medical Laboratory Science Program
VA Hines Hospital
5000 South 5th Avenue
Pathology & Lab Medicine (113-School)
Hines, IL 60141-3030

- ✶ Those students who have completed their application by the closing date of December 1 ***and*** who meet our stated minimal acceptance criteria will be contacted by the Program Director to schedule a mandatory personal interview. Interviews are generally conducted during late December and early January.

- ✶ Those students who are accepted into the Program must present evidence of good health by obtaining a physical examination prior to the start of classes. Any medical findings that contraindicate admission to the Program may result in withdrawal of the appointment.

- ✶ Those students who are accepted into the Program agree to submit to a federal employee criminal background check and fingerprinting as administered through the Hospital Human Resource Management Service. Any findings that contraindicate admission may result in withdrawal of the appointment to the Program.

Application Deadline is December 1st, all items complete