

CERTIFICATE FAQ's (FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS)

IS A SPECIFIC DEGREE REQUIRED?

A bachelor's degree (B.S. or B.A.) from an accredited college or university is required, preferably in chemistry, biology, biochemistry, microbiology, clinical laboratory science or other related field. In addition, all applicants must complete prerequisite courses as listed on the linked document [Admission Requirements](#) (pdf). As the profession requires strong laboratory skills, an academic curriculum that includes hands-on laboratory courses is recommended.

IS A MASTER'S, PhD, or MD ACCEPTED?

A master's, PhD, or MD degree is accepted, but preferential acceptance to the program is not considered due to completion of an advanced degree.

WHERE CAN I FIND PREREQUISITE CORE COURSES?

Below is information that may provide assistance in finding commonly requested required classes in the San Diego area. Please verify class schedules and enrollment opportunities with each institution.

Analytical Chemistry or Clinical Chemistry	UC San Diego & UCSD Extension 'concurrent enrollment'; Chem 100A SDSU-Open University; Chem 251 Analytical Chemistry CHEM 220 local Junior Colleges - City, Mesa, Miramar; CHEM 251
Immunology	UC San Diego; BICD 140 SDSU; BIOL 485
Hematology	SDSU-Open University; BIOL 480
Medical/Clinical Microbiology	UC San Diego; BIMM 124 SDSU; BIOL 584

Please note: SDSU courses may be offered as campus or Open University courses.

UCSD and SDSU enrolled undergrad students are often given top priority to register.

SDSU CLS Information: <http://www.sci.sdsu.edu/bioadvise/cls.html>

CAN I TAKE ON-LINE COURSES?

- Online courses are available at institutions in and outside of the San Diego area, however a hands-on learning environment including laboratory experience is highly recommended. Before registering for any core course not listed above, it is advisable to verify acceptability of the course with a program representative.
- Please note that Laboratory Field Services, the agency of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH-LFS) that issues the CLS Trainee Licenses (TRL) renders the final determination on course acceptability.
- Online courses may also be available from: University of North Dakota, UC Berkeley Extension, Weber State University, and other accredited colleges.

CAN I APPLY TO THE PROGRAM WHILE I AM STILL TAKING COURSES?

- Applications from applicants who have not yet completed prerequisite courses will be considered if proof of class enrollment is submitted, and the course is scheduled to conclude with a letter grade conferred on an official transcript by May 1st of the year of admission.
- Also by May 1st, an official academic transcript documenting conferring of a degree and the date the degree was conferred or awarded must be available, and sent if requested by the program.
- This deadline is required to allow time for CDPH-LFS to review transcripts and issue the CLS Trainee License (TRL) in a timely manner.

IS A COURSE IN GENERAL MICROBIOLOGY ACCEPTED?

No. Applicants must take a course in human 'medical' or 'clinical' microbiology. Microbiology includes the study of bacteriology, and at least minimal coverage of parasitology, mycology and virology.

ARE DEGREES FROM COUNTRIES OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES ACCEPTED?

- Degrees from countries outside of the United States are accepted, but applicants must submit evaluations of foreign transcripts by agencies approved by the Lab Field Services to the program by a specified due date. Refer to the [Admission Requirements](#) (pdf) document linked from the main webpage for details.
- For degrees or coursework obtained outside of the U.S., applicants must also apply for the CLS Trainee License (TRL) prior to applying, and submit documentation of that application to the program.
- U.S. citizenship or permanent residency in the U.S. is also a requirement of the certificate program.

IS WORK EXPERIENCE IN A CLINICAL LABORATORY REQUIRED?

Due to the requirement for strong laboratory skills in the profession, work experience in a clinical laboratory or similar environment is strongly recommended. Experience in a research or university laboratory is applicable, but applicants should understand the differences between academic and clinical laboratories in regards to goals, processes, workflow and work environments. Suggested experience includes working as a laboratory technician, laboratory assistant or phlebotomist in a clinical lab.

DOES THE PROGRAM GRANT A DEGREE?

The San Diego CLS Training Program is a post-baccalaureate certificate program administered by UC San Diego Extension. Graduates who successfully complete the program will receive a certificate of completion that infers competence in clinical laboratory science, and qualifies them to register for the Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLS) certification exam offered by the American Society of Clinical Pathologists (ASCP) Board of Certification, and the California (CA) law quiz offered by the California Department of Public Health, Laboratory Field Services. A degree is not conferred by the program.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS AND TUITION?

- Program fee for all courses: \$10,000 + \$95 certificate. No stipend is offered. A structured quarterly payment plan may be made available.
- Applicants accepted into the program are required to cover personal costs such as living expenses, transportation, and other pre-training health requirements. Costs of application for MLS certification and California CLS licensure is the responsibility of the student. Lab coats and laboratory personal protective equipment are provided by the program's training sites.
- Note for Veterans: Click [here](#) to learn about veterans' education benefits. To clarify how your benefits will work at UC San Diego Extension, contact us at unex-veterans@ucsd.edu.

- For general information on financial assistance in the form of loans, the UC San Diego Extension Financial Assistance department at unex-finasst@ucsd.edu may be contacted.

IS IT DIFFICULT TO GET ACCEPTED TO THE PROGRAM?

After a comprehensive review of the applications by a program committee, approximately 30 highly qualified applicants are invited to interview with the admissions committee in the month of March. Final selection of applicants is typically complete by the end of March. The program currently admits approximately 15 students per year. Over the last 5 years, the program has entertained in excess of 100 applications per year.

WHAT CAN I DO TO STRENGTHEN MY APPLICATION?

Final acceptance of candidates is made using criteria that includes the applicant's academic performance, clinical laboratory experience, personal statement, interview, quality and recency of coursework and communication skills.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO RE-APPLY?

Applicants may re-apply by submitting new application documents – Application form, personal statement, resume/C.V., and at least 2 new letters of recommendation. The application committee will retain transcripts and prior letters of recommendation for the previous one (1) year only. Re-applicants are encouraged to strengthen their applications through clinical laboratory experience and additional relevant coursework.