

# Clinical Laboratory Scientist (CLS)

## Referral Checklist and FAQ

### What is the CLS Program?

Graduates of a Clinical Laboratory Scientist (CLS) program are members of the healthcare team who provide clinical information for disease prevention, medical diagnosis and treatment of a patient by processing specimens and performing laboratory tests. Clinical Laboratory Scientists require a bachelor's degree in medical technology or in one of the life sciences.

The usual requirement for an entry-level position as a clinical laboratory scientist is a bachelor's degree with a major in medical technology or one of the life sciences; however, it is possible to qualify for some jobs with a combination of education and on-the-job and specialized training. Universities and hospitals offer medical technology programs. In California, eligibility to take the exam requires a full academic year of clinical training for 52 weeks, 4 days/week, 8 hours/day as well as one 6-hour day/week of face-to-face and online classes.

***Clinical laboratory scientists and technicians held about 328,100 jobs in 2008. More than half of jobs were in hospitals. Most of the remaining jobs were in offices of physicians and in medical and diagnostic laboratories. A small proportion was in educational services and in all other ambulatory healthcare services.***

### What is a Clinical Laboratory Scientist (CLS)?

- CLSs are the third step in the Career Ladder after a Phlebotomist and a Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT)
- CLSs are an important part of the medical team. Working together with pathologists, specialists and overseeing MLTs they help determine the presence, extent or absence of disease and provide vital data to evaluate the effectiveness of treatment.
- CLSs are high level laboratory professionals who perform testing in the clinical laboratory.
- CLSs are graduates of nationally accredited or state approved CLS training programs which include academic and practical training. Core courses include: Chemistry, Hematology, Immunology, Blood Bank (nationally accredited programs only), Urinalysis and Body Fluids, Coagulation, Microbiology. Practical training includes hands-on experience in each area of a clinical laboratory.
- CLSs pass a national and state level examination, certifying them to work in California.

### Qualifications:

Bachelor's degree, 12 months training in a California approved CLS program and pass a state approved certifying exam.



### CLS Program Locations

#### San Francisco Bay Area

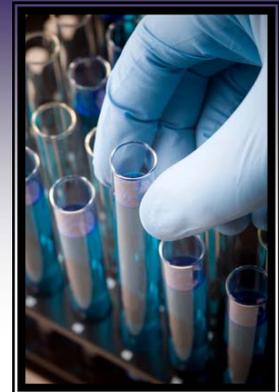
San Jose State Univ.  
San Francisco State Univ.

#### San Diego

UC San Diego

#### Los Angeles/Orange County

Cal State Los Angeles  
Cal Poly Pomona  
Cal State Dominguez Hills



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## What kind of classes do I need to take before being accepted into a CLS program?

Each CLS Program may have their own specific program prerequisites. Check the specific school's website for exact courses. This field requires a strong background in science which may include courses in:

- Human Anatomy & Physiology
- Chemistry
- Microbiology
- CA Phlebotomy certification (CPT-1) – this may be included in an MLT training program, check the specific school's website

## As a CLS will I find a job?

- Currently there are severe laboratory staffing shortages nationwide including California. Position vacancy rates range from 9%-20%.
- Job projections predict the need for clinical laboratory professionals will increase in the next 8 years due to increase demand for testing and replacement of retirees.
- CLSs enjoy excellent salaries and benefits as well as great opportunities for lifelong learning through continued education.

## As a CLS, where can I work?

- Hospital laboratories
- Clinics
- Physician Offices
- Commercial laboratories
- Veterinary laboratories
- Research laboratories
- Biotechnology
- Pharmaceutical companies



## Will I make a good CLS?

- Are you a problem solver who enjoys challenging questions?
- Are you interested in combining the study of biology and chemistry with the exploration of state of the art technology to make a difference in patient care?
- Are you interested in becoming part of the health care team, performing testing to assist in the detection, diagnosis and treatment of disease? 85% of diagnostic treatment formulated by physicians is based on information obtained by laboratory professionals.
- Are you interested in becoming part of the health care team, performing testing to assist in the detection, diagnosis and treatment of disease? 85% of diagnostic treatment formulated by physicians is based on information obtained by laboratory professionals.
- Are you deeply committed to a laboratory profession and truly fascinated by all that science has to offer?
- Do you possess these qualities: accurate, dedicated, self-motivated, problem solver, always looking for a challenge, welcoming responsibility, reliable, possess good communication skills, and work well under pressure?
- Do you have the ability to relate to people, a capacity for calm and reasoned judgment and commitment to the patient?
- Can you keep patient data confidential?

## Are there opportunities for advancement?

CLSs are the 3rd step in the Laboratory Career Ladder after Phlebotomist and Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT).

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