



College of Health Sciences

Department of Medical Laboratory Science

Essential Functions

Essential functions are those non-academic requirements that an applicant must possess or develop to participate successfully in the program. The Medical Laboratory Scientist must be able to:

Observation

- characterize color, clarity, and viscosity of biological and reagent materials
- use bright-field, fluorescent and phase binocular microscopes to discriminate fine differences in size (1 μm range) and color (hue, shading and intensity) in microscopic specimens
- recognize and distinguish text, numbers and graphs in print and on monitor screens

Movement

- move freely and safely about in a clinical laboratory
- perform moderately taxing, continuous, physical and mental work in an eight hour period, often requiring prolonged sitting
- lift and move objects weighing up to 15 pounds on a regular basis and up to 50 pounds on an occasional basis
- reach laboratory bench tops, shelves, and patients seated in specimen collection chairs
- manipulate phlebotomy and culture acquisition equipment to safely collect valid laboratory specimens from patients
- manipulate laboratory equipment such as pipettes, inoculating loops, test tubes, centrifuges, dials and other instrument components to perform laboratory procedures
- use a computer keyboard to operate laboratory instruments and to record laboratory information

Communication

- follow oral and written instructions to correctly perform laboratory procedures
- effectively converse with patients about specimen collection and laboratory tests in a confidential and professional manner

- communicate with faculty, other students, staff and other health care professionals in a professional manner, both verbally and in writing

Behavior

- perform all duties with honesty, integrity, confidentiality and responsibility. The student must be forthright about errors or uncertainty and take responsibility for his/her own actions.
- manage the use of time, systematizing actions to complete professional and technical tasks within realistic constraints. The student should use “down-time” wisely by preparing ahead of time for future learning assignments or reviewing material previously learned.
- provide professional and technical services, using one’s intellect and exercising appropriate judgment, while experiencing the stress of task-related uncertainty (i.e. ambiguous test ordering, ambivalent test interpretation), emergent demands (i.e. “STAT” test orders), and a distracting environment (i.e. moderate noise, complex visual stimuli)
- be flexible and creative in adapting to professional and technical change
- recognize potentially hazardous materials, equipment, and situations, proceeding safely to minimize risk of injury to self and nearby personnel
- adapt to working with unpleasant biological materials or reagents
- support and promote the activities of colleagues, adopting a team approach to learning, task completion, problem solving and patient care

The National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Science (NAACLS) requires schools to define and publish specific essential functions required for admission to the program and to determine that a student’s health will permit him/her to meet the essential functions.