Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare

Medical Laboratory Science Certificate Program

2025-2026 Student Catalog & Handbook

(2nd Edition)

TALLAHASSEE MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE

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This handbook is available as a hard copy upon request.

The information provided in this catalog is intended only for TMH-MLS audiences. Other affiliated institutions may adhere to separate policies and procedures.

INTRODUCTION

Medical Laboratory Science (MLS)

A medical laboratory scientist (MLS), also known as a medical technologist or clinical laboratory scientist, works to analyze a variety of biological specimens, usually from humans, and then report their findings to physicians. Medical laboratory scientists analyze biological specimens using complex tests and sophisticated equipment or analyzers. The data they find plays a key role in identifying, treating, and monitoring medical conditions, such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and anemias. It is estimated that 60 to 70 percent of all decisions regarding a patient's diagnosis, treatment, hospital admission, and discharge are based on the results of the tests medical laboratory scientists perform.

Scope of practice

Areas of medical laboratory science include microbiology, chemistry, hematology, immunology, transfusion medicine or blood bank, toxicology, and molecular diagnostics.

Medical laboratory scientists have a wide variety of responsibilities and duties, including but not limited to:

- Examining and analyzing blood, body fluids, tissues, and cells.
- Relaying test results to physicians in a timely manner.
- Utilizing microscopes, cell counters, and other high-precision lab equipment.
- Cross-matching blood for transfusion.
- Monitoring patient outcomes.
- Performing differential cell counts looking for abnormal cells to aid in the diagnosis of anemia and leukemia.
- Establishing quality assurance programs to monitor and ensure the accuracy of test results.
- Overseeing the work of a medical laboratory technician and lab assistants or phlebotomists.

Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare

Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH) is a private, non-profit healthcare system that was founded in Tallahassee, Florida in 1948. Currently, TMH delivers care to a 22-county region that spans North Florida and South Georgia through numerous healthcare facilities, including: 772-bed acute care hospital, surgery and adult ICU centers, a psychiatric hospital, multiple specialty care centers, 3 physician residency programs, and 50 affiliated physician practices. TMH provides innovative technology and a broad spectrum of services with a number of important distinctions. For example, TMH is home to the area's only state-designated Trauma Center and the Big Bend's only accredited community hospital cancer program. TMH is also recognized by the Society of Chest Pain Centers as an Accredited Chest Pain Center with PCI. Additionally, TMH has the only Neurological and Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Units and is North Florida's only Comprehensive Stroke Center.

Within this healthcare system there are currently 3 laboratories: the main laboratory, the Cancer Center laboratory, and the Northeast Emergency Center laboratory. Over the past several years, TMH laboratory has encountered significant challenges in recruiting and retaining MLS across our laboratories. This is also a national concern due to a substantial gap in retirees and the number of new MLS graduates. In fact, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that by 2030 there will be a faster-than-average growth in MLS job opportunities with over 26,000 new positions. To resolve this issue, in 2025, TMH laboratory is thrilled to offer our community with an educational opportunity that is affordable and less time consuming than other programs.

MLS Program Overview

Currently, there are no other MLS certificate opportunities within the Tallahassee area that bear no financial cost and lasts only one year. We are able to provide this low-cost certificate program based on a two-year agreement to work at TMH laboratory upon successful graduation, national certification, and state licensure.

TMH MLS certificate program is designed to graduate students after 53-weeks of virtual courses and in-person clinical rotations within the main laboratory. After receiving certification of completion from the program, students will be able to sit for national board exams, either through American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) or American Medical Technologists (AMT). Once certified through a national board, they are guaranteed a position in the TMH laboratory without any student debt.

We will provide necessary resources for the certificate program at no cost to the students, which include didactic materials, audiovisual equipment, educational computer programs, certification study guides, textbooks, and classrooms with computer workstations. Additionally, TMH has offered to cover the cost of national and state certification fees for program graduates.

The hospital's main laboratory will serve as the hub for the majority of the clinical rotations. Included departments are client services (collection/processing), core laboratory (hematology/hemostasis, urinalysis, and chemistry), microbiology, immunology, molecular diagnostics, and blood bank. The hospital's laboratory is equipped with highly advanced technical equipment that the students will learn to operate and maintain. In addition, there will be numerous manual testing opportunities. Students will also experience other blood bank settings through virtual tours provided by One Blood, Inc. and a one-week rotation at an off-site location at One Blood, Inc. in Tallahassee, FL.

We will begin the program with an introductory course that will introduce several topics such as ethics, lab safety, lab math, and phlebotomy. We will continue expanding on laboratory concepts and conclude the program with advanced courses, such as MLS Review. Throughout the program, students will learn and demonstrate correct pre-analytical aspects of the laboratory (ordering, collecting, processing), correct analytical aspects of the laboratory (analyzing specimens), and correct post-analytical aspects of the laboratory (result interpretation and reporting).

MLS Program Purpose, Mission & Goals

Purpose

To provide the healthcare community with a concise, affordable, and accessible MLS Certificate Program.

Mission Statement

To be known as the most engaged and supportive MLS program that provides professional, proficient, and knowledgeable MLS students who uphold high standards of quality and accuracy.

Program Goals

1. **Participate in routine quality improvement surveys and open discussions** to ensure that:
    a. we have a quality-driven curriculum,
    b. we are utilizing relevant and current methodologies and technologies, and
    c. the coursework is supporting student development.
2. **Promote a supportive and encouraging environment** so all students will feel safe to learn, ask questions, and submit feedback.
3. **Provide the framework for a successful transition** into an entry-level MLS career by promoting continuous professional development, professional behaviors, teamwork skills, and analytical decision-making skills.

Objectives and Competencies

General Program Objectives and Career-Entry Competencies

The general program objectives are used to ensure that the students are competent for a career-entry job in the MLS field. General program objectives will be evaluated after each rotation by the student *and* by their clinical preceptor, when applicable. If a clinical preceptor is not available, then the student will be evaluated by their didactic instructor.

Throughout and during each course of the program, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of diversity and the needs of individuals relative to language, race, religion, age, gender, physical requirements, nationality, and culture.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the healthcare delivery system and health occupations.
3. Apply "ICARE" values (integrity, compassion, accountability, respect, and excellence) to their work performance and interactions with others.
4. Recognize, enhance and/or contribute to a safe and secure environment for all colleagues, visitors, and patients.
5. Recognize and respond to emergency situations.
6. Recognize and practice infection control procedures.
7. Demonstrate knowledge of blood borne diseases, including HIV/AIDS.
8. Use interpersonal and communication skills effectively, professionally, and timely during all interactions.
9. Adhere to policies and procedures of the certificate program, the laboratory, and the healthcare system.
10. Comply with standards set in place by government and accreditation agencies.
11. Pursue individual opportunities to gain additional clinical, professional, and educational experiences.
12. Demonstrate appropriate use of laboratory information systems, computers, and patient information in relation to patient privacy and confidentiality.
13. Accept and utilize constructive criticism from faculty/staff.
14. Remain fully attentive to their surroundings and other individuals at all times.
15. Discuss the general responsibilities and functions encountered by a medical laboratory scientist.
16. Exercise initiative, especially while in demanding, urgent, or problematic situations.
17. Exercise independent critical thinking when handling problems in pre-analytical, analytical, and post-analytical phases.
18. Apply basic math and science skills.
19. Practice accepted procedures of transporting, accessioning and processing specimens.
20. Evaluate laboratory findings and relate it to patient history to identify probable physiological disease processes or, in some cases, possible interfering substances.
21. Suggest appropriate laboratory tests when requested by healthcare staff.
22. Demonstrate basic knowledge of and perform Point of Care (POC) waived testing and/or CLIA approved waived instrumentation.
23. Demonstrate knowledge of basic principles, methodologies, and equipment used in the laboratory.
24. Demonstrate knowledge of quality control and quality assurance measures during all lab operations.
25. Properly operate and troubleshoot analyzers to include basic preventative and corrective maintenance.

Course Objectives

Course-specific objectives in the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains can be found in the course syllabi.

Admission Requirements

Each applicant will be considered based on educational transcripts, grades, failed courses, degree(s), résumé/CV, and the interview process. Additionally, MLS students must possess the ability to perform certain tasks (refer to the "*Essential Functions*" section) and be cleared by Human Resources to work in the laboratory as a student.

Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare and its team members complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate based on race, color, nationality, age, disability, or sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity/expression.

Prerequisite Coursework

The student should have graduated with a **bachelor's degree in the science field.** Fundamentally, most pre-med, biology, and chemistry major graduates will have satisfied the prerequisite coursework below:

- **Biological Sciences** - A minimum of 16 semester hours (24 quarter hours) of biological sciences from an accredited college/university. All science classes should include labs. Survey courses are not acceptable.
    - **Required: Microbiology with lab.**
    - Immunology is preferred.
    - Other recommended courses include Medical Microbiology, Parasitology, Mycology, and Virology.
- **Chemistry** - A minimum of 16 semester hours (24 quarter hours) of chemistry from a regionally accredited college/ university. All science classes should include labs. Survey courses are not acceptable.
    - **Required: Organic chemistry with lab -OR- Biochemistry with lab.**
- **Mathematics** - 1 semester or 1 quarter of College Mathematics.
    - **Required course is either Algebra, Calculus, or Statistics.**

Please note that we are unable to offer advanced placement based on previous coursework. For example, if a student took a medical microbiology course at a college/university, it would not replace the microbiology course given during the MLS program.

GPA and Grades

To be considered, the student should have an overall grade point average of 2.7 (out of 4.0) or better, and a science grade point average of > 2.7 (out of 4.0) is recommended. A grade of "C" or higher in each required science course is recommended to be competitive in the application process. Any "D" or failed courses should be discussed with the program director to develop a corrective action plan.

Application Materials

The deadline to apply for the winter cohort is October 1st. Winter cohort will begin classes the last week of January. **The deadline to apply for the summer cohort is May 1st.** Summer cohort will begin classes the last week of August. Applications not completed prior to the deadline will not be considered. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all required materials are forwarded and received. A completed application includes the items listed below:

1. **Application form** (provided at the end of handbook).
2. **Official transcript** from all colleges and universities should be submitted directly to the address on the next page. Transcripts of all college credits must be submitted by the universities bearing the college seal. Applicants with foreign degrees must have their transcripts evaluated by an acceptable agency.
3. **Two letters of recommendation** must be submitted from the source's work email or work letterhead. If the recommendation is from a professor, science professors are preferred.
4. **Résumé or CV** with a **cover letter**.

Selection Process & Interview

The selection committee will review all student application materials and will select qualified students for an interview. Interviews will be conducted by a minimum of two members of the selection committee. The selection committee consists of the program director, faculty, and members of the advisory committee (See "*Personnel*" section). The interview is used to assess each applicant's motivation, goals, communication skills, professional conduct, interpersonal skills, and a realistic concept of commitment to the MLS profession.

After all applications are reviewed and the qualified applicants have been interviewed, the selection committee will choose 6 of the best candidates for initial admission and will also create a pool of alternate candidates. In the case of *equal* applicant status, applicants employed by TMH system will be considered first.

Human Resources (HR) Admission Requirements

After acceptance into the program, HR must ensure that the student is able to perform essential functions as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Acts Jobs Demand List (listed under "*Essential Functions*" section).

Students will also need to complete the following items for HR: a **health screening (including vaccination records), urine drug screening, and a background check.**

Due to healthcare exposure to blood and other biological samples, TMH employees and students must abide by the vaccination requirements including two MMR shots, two varicella shots, and a negative PPD or QuantiFERON to rule out tuberculosis infection. If vaccination status is uncertain, immunity titers for MMR and Varicella will suffice. Additionally, the Hepatitis B shot is recommended, but not required.

Students who fail to meet any onboarding requirements with HR will be dismissed from the program.

Additional Admission Requirements

To perform work in a medical lab in Florida, students are legally required to register with the State of Florida as a trainee. **Students cannot handle biological samples until they have obtained a Florida trainee license.** Therefore, if a student has not obtained a Florida trainee license in a timely manner, then they will not be able to complete the program.

Additionally, due to the nature of medical laboratory work, **students are required to have health insurance and liability insurance,** which TMH cannot provide to students. If a student does not have either health insurance or liability insurance, the student will not be allowed to handle biological samples and will not be able to complete the clinical rotations and, therefore, the program. **Students will need to provide proof of health and liability insurances before clinical rotations begin.** If an adverse event arises, the student will need to submit their own claims through their health and/or liability insurance.

Submit all documents to the following address or email:

Ashley Humphries
Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare
Laboratory Department
1300 Miccosukee Rd.
Tallahassee, FL, 32308
ashley.humphries@tmh.org

Essential Functions

Essential functions are the essential nonacademic requirements of the program that a student must be able to master to participate successfully in the MLS Program and to become employable. Our program's essential functions are provided below and are adopted from "*Essential Requirements for Clinical Laboratory Science*." If a student is not sure that they will be able to meet these essential functions, they should consult with the program director or Human Resources for their individual situation.

Essential Observational Functions

- Observe laboratory demonstrations in which biologicals (i.e., body fluids, culture materials, tissue sections, and cellular specimens) are assessed for their biochemical, hematological, immunological, microbiological, and histochemical components.
- Characterize the color, odor, clarity, and viscosity of biologicals, reagents, or chemical reaction products.
- Employ a clinical grade binocular microscope to discriminate among fine structural and color (hue, shading, and intensity) differences of microscopic specimens.
- Read and comprehend text, numbers, and graphs displayed in print and on a video monitor.

Essential Movement Functions

- Move freely and safely about the laboratory.
- Reach laboratory bench tops and shelves, patients lying in hospital beds or patients seated in specimen collection furniture.
- Travel to clinical laboratory sites for practical experience.
- Perform moderately taxing continuous physical work, often requiring prolonged standing over several hours.
- Maneuver phlebotomy and culture acquisition equipment to safely collect valid laboratory specimens for patients.
- Control laboratory equipment (i.e. pipettes, inoculating loops, test tubes) and adjust instruments to perform laboratory procedures.
- Use an electronic keyboard (i.e. 101-key IBM computer keyboard) to operate laboratory instruments and to calculate, record, evaluate, and transmit laboratory information.

Essential Intellectual Functions

- Possess these intellectual skills: comprehension, measurement, mathematical calculation, reasoning, integration, analysis, comparison, self-expression, and criticism.
- Be able to exercise sufficient judgment to recognize and correct performance deviations.

Essential Communication Functions

- Read and comprehend technical and professional materials.
- Follow verbal and written instructions in order to perform laboratory test procedures correctly and independently.
- Clearly instruct patients prior to specimen collection.
- Effectively, confidentially, and sensitively converse with patients regarding laboratory tests.
- Communicate with faculty members, fellow students, staff, and other health care professionals verbally and in a recorded format.
- Independently prepare papers or laboratory reports, and take examinations on paper or computer, or in the laboratory for practical exams.

Essential Behavioral Functions

- Be able to manage the use of time and be able to systematize actions in order to complete professional and technical tasks within realistic constraints.
- Possess the emotional health necessary to effectively employ intellect and exercise appropriate judgment.
- Be able to provide professional and technical services while experiencing the stresses 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. high noise levels, crowding, complex visual stimuli).
- Be flexible and creative and adapt to professional and technical change.
- Recognize potentially hazardous materials, equipment, and situations and proceed safely in order to minimize risk of injury to patients, self, and nearby individuals.
- Adapt to working with unpleasant biologicals.
- Support and promote the activities of fellow students and of health care professionals. Promotion of peers helps furnish a team approach to learning, task completion, problem solving, and patient care.
- Be honest, compassionate, ethical, and responsible. The student must be forthright about errors or uncertainty. The student must be able to critically evaluate her or his own performance, accept constructive criticism, and look for ways to improve (i.e. participate in enriched educational activities). The student must be able to evaluate the performance of fellow students and tactfully offer constructive comments.

Curriculum and Course Descriptions

The MLS certificate program will last **53-weeks** with students expecting to spend 30-40 hours per week in lectures (virtual) and clinical rotations (on-site). Introductory lectures will occur at the beginning of the program. Clinical rotations with advanced didactic lectures will occur at the end of the program. During clinical rotations, there will be 1 qualified MLS preceptor for every 1 student, or 1 dedicated preceptor for every 3 students. Lectures will be delivered virtually with a 1:10 ratio, at most. In each course, students will be assessed on the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains.

A syllabus will be provided at the beginning of each course lecture and rotation detailing the course objectives, clinical rotation checklists, assignments, and assessments with due dates. Practical and written assessments will be delivered for each area of the laboratory to evaluate cognitive and psychomotor domains. The affective domain will be evaluated through self-evaluations and faculty evaluations.

Course & Clinical Sequencing

For every student, the program will begin with Introduction to MLS course and end with MLS Review. Based on cohort size and staffing limitations, the clinical rotation schedules may vary for each student. A detailed schedule will be provided to the students before classes begin.

Notes:
(1) The upper-level course numbering system indicates that these courses require prior educational courses and, at minimum, a bachelor's degree.

MLS 4038: **Intro to MLS** (*3 weeks total*)	**MLS 4862:** **Clinical Chemistry** (*10 weeks total*)	**MLS 4865:** **Clinical Microbiology** (*14 weeks total*)
MLS 4860: **Urinalysis & Body Fluids** (*3 weeks total*)	**MLS 4863:** **Clinical Hematology & Hemostasis** (*10 weeks total*)	**MLS 4866:** **Lab Management & Education** (*throughout 52 weeks*)
MLS 4861: **Clinical Immunology** (*3 weeks total*)	**MLS 4864:** **Immunohematology** (*7 weeks total*)	**MLS 4880:** **MLS Review** (*1 week, no rotation*)

Course Descriptions & Semester Credit Hours

Note: Regarding credit transferability to another institution, please refer to the other institution for acceptability. Regarding credit transferability to our program, we will not offer advanced placement based on previous credit hours.

Throughout every course, students will learn pre-analytical, analytical, and post-analytical aspects of the laboratory. Pre-analytical aspects encompass topics such as sample collection and processing. Analytical aspects include procedures such as sample analysis and test methodologies. Post-analytical aspects include result reporting, such as calling critical results.

Introduction to Medical Laboratory Science (3hrs)

This course introduces the policies and procedures of the medical laboratory and TMH. Course topics include governing agencies laws/regulations, Florida laws and regulations, quality assurance/controls, risk management, medical error prevention, infection control, universal precautions, HIV/AIDS and other hospital acquired infections, lab safety, lab mathematics, microscopy basics, phlebotomy, proper sample processing, and Point-of-Care testing.

Clinical Urinalysis & Body Fluids (3hrs)

This course provides an overview of clinical urinalysis assessments and related renal diseases. Topics include:

- Basic function, physiology, and disease of the kidney.
- Physical, chemical, and microscopic analysis of urine.

Clinical Immunology (3hrs)

This course provides an overview of basic immunological techniques and diseases. Course topics include:

- Common lab techniques in immunology.
- Immunodeficient, immunoproliferative, and autoimmune diseases.
- Immunological response to allergens, viruses, bacteria, fungi, and parasites.

Clinical Hematology and Hemostasis (6hrs)

This course covers blood formation, cell morphology, coagulation factors, and body fluid analysis. Normal and abnormal cells will be discussed, including diseases such as anemias and leukemias. Testing methodologies, clinical results, and clinical conditions will be correlated. Topics:

- Basic hematology, hemostasis, and body fluid mechanisms and techniques.
- Diseases and conditions related to hematology and hemostasis.
- Manual counts, differentials, morphologies, and inclusions of red blood cells, white blood cells, and other cells in body fluids.

Clinical Microbiology (6hrs)

This course covers theoretical knowledge and practical applications needed to work with and identify microorganisms including bacteria, fungus, parasites, and viruses. Microbial identification and sensitivity testing are included. Topics include:

- Entry level microbiology concepts (bacteriology, parasitology, mycology, and virology).
- Basic microbiology principles, procedures, and techniques.
- Clinical result evaluation and correlation with health.
- Antibiotic stewardship and antimicrobial susceptibility.

Clinical Chemistry (6hrs)

This course emphasizes biochemistry and pathophysiology of various diseases and body systems in the lecture series. Testing methodologies, instrumentation, and correlation of lab results to diseases is emphasized in clinical rotation. Topics include:

- Instrumentation and analysis techniques used in chemistry.
- Data evaluation of chemical assessments and medical laboratory testing, including case studies.
- Organ function and its related medical laboratory tests.

Clinical Immunohematology (6hrs)

This course covers the theory and practice related to transfusion medicine including typing, compatibility testing, and identification of antibodies. Topics include:

- Donor blood selection, collection, processing, and testing.
- Blood component collection, preparation, storage, and utilization.
- Governing agencies in the blood bank lab.
- Blood group genetics, phenotypes, and various blood group systems.
- Blood banking techniques and quality control methods.
- Transfusion reactions and investigations.
- Immune hemolytic disorders and Hemolytic Disease of the Fetus and Newborn.

Clinical Laboratory Management and Education (1hr)

This course is designed to enable the student to gain entry-level knowledge of principles in lab education and management. Topics include:

- Entry level principles of lab operation, education, management, and inventory control.
- Basics of quality programs and quality improvement plans.

MLS Review (1hr)

This course is designed to review all topics in medical laboratory science to prepare for board examinations and a job in the clinical lab. All previous courses will be included as topics. Students may utilize the laboratory to strengthen weak areas or to make up any missed clinical hours.

Academic Calendar

Detailed course schedules and calendars with assignment deadlines will be provided at student orientation.

	Winter Cohort	Summer Cohort
Enrollment Period	Oct 1 – Nov 1, 2025	April 1 – May 1, 2025
Candidate Interviews & Selections	Nov 2 – 10, 2025	April 2 –11, 2025
FL Trainee Application Deadline	Nov 30 2025	May 30 2025
Program Start Date	Jan 26 2026	Aug 25 2025
Withdrawal Deadline	60 days after start date	60 days after start date
MLS Final Exam	Jan 28 2027	Aug 24 2026
Graduation	Jan 30 2027	Aug 29 2026
Recognized Holidays	**Jan 1st, July 4th, Easter, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas**	

Note: If onboarding requirements are not completed by the student by the program start date, the student may not be able to start the program.

Grades and Academic Progress

Grading Scale

The grading scale is as follows:

90 - 100	A
80 - 89	B
70 - 79	C
60 – 69	D
60 – 0	F

If a student shows an abnormal trend with their normal performance or multiple C's are accumulated, the program director will counsel the student and/or provide a plan for improvement. In the event a student fails multiple courses after intervention measures, they will be dismissed from the program.

To be eligible for MLS certification at the end of the year, a minimum passing score of 70% (C) must be maintained.

Final Grades

Final grades for each area are determined by averaging the following:

1. **Lecture – 50% of final grade**
   - 20%: Quizzes (cognitive domain)
   - 50%: Examinations (cognitive domain)
   - 30%: Assessments (cognitive domain)
2. **Rotation – 50% of final grade**
   - 50%: practical assessments (psychomotor domain)
   - 40%: written assessments (cognitive domain)
   - 10%: evaluations (affective domain)

Evaluations

Students are evaluated by their clinical preceptors during each clinical rotation. These evaluations focus on the affective domains demonstrated by the student during the rotation and are a portion of the clinical rotation grade. Students, in turn, are requested to evaluate themselves, the rotations, the lectures, faculty, and the overall program. Feedback, comments, and constructive criticisms are vital to the welfare of the program. Student cooperation in completing thought-out evaluations is solicited.

Academic Guidance and Counseling

Academic guidance, advising, and counseling is primarily given by the program director. Simple personal counseling or advice is provided by the program director, medical director, administrative director, staff pathologists, department managers, supervisors, or lead MLS's. Counseling of a more serious nature is referred to social agencies. Counseling, academic guidance, and advising of any nature is confidential and impartial.

Student Withdrawal

Any student wishing to withdraw from the program must state their intention in writing with their handwritten signature. The program director, medical lab director, and/or lab director will attempt to counsel the student or resolve program issues prior to accepting the resignation.

Graduation

Graduation Requirements

Upon successful completion of the certificate program and clinical rotations, students will be awarded an official certificate of completion from Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare. **Students will not be awarded a certificate if grades are below 70% or "C," or if there are any outstanding assignments, clinical hours, or if credit hours are less than 34.** However, students will be given opportunities to "make-up" their assignments and clinical hours, but it is the student's responsibility to complete any outstanding requirements *before* the graduation date. Additionally, the program may not be able to accommodate significant outstanding assignments and clinical hours.

Please note: Awarding the program certificate is not contingent upon external licensure or certification.

Post-Graduation

The awarded student will be eligible to take a national certification exam offered by the American Society of Clinical Pathologists (ASCP) or the American Medical Technologists (AMT). Students must pass either certification exam to meet medical lab employment requirements in Florida. After national certification, the certified MLS will then apply for a lab scientist/technologist license with the Florida Department of Health. Once the student has obtained national certification and state licensure, the individual may be employed at one of the TMH laboratories and paid based on fair market value, which is determined by HR. Employment by TMH cannot be promised or guaranteed. In the absence of lab positions, the individual will have no contractual or financial responsibility to TMH, if applicable.

Program Tuition and Fees

TMH has agreed to accept students without any tuition, book fees, or licensure fees (for 1st attempt), as long as the student agrees to work in a TMH laboratory for 2 years. However, the student will be financially responsible for their own room/ board, meals and drinks, health insurance, and liability insurance:

HR requirements*	Varies
Textbook Fee*	Up to $600
State of Florida Trainee Licensure*	$45
State of Florida Licensure*!	$100
ASCP certification exam*!	$250
Professional liability Insurance*	$43/yr from HPSO
Health insurance*	Dependent on student's insurance plan

***** *Indicates that cost will depend on provider and may vary*

! *Indicates that payment will be due after the program is completed*

Withdrawal

If the student signed an agreement and promissory note with TMH, and they withdraw after 60 days of the first day of class, they may be legally indebted to TMH depending on the agreement terms.

Student Conduct

Enrolled students are considered team members of Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare who are expected to abide by the policies and procedures of TMH healthcare system, TMH laboratory, and the MLS Certificate Program.

Attendance and Tardiness

Attendance and tardiness will be carefully monitored. Students are expected to be in their assigned rotations at the expected dates and times. **A student will be considered tardy if they are more than 5 minutes late.** If a student expects to be tardy, they should immediately inform the program director who will inform the clinical preceptors that will be affected. If a student expects to be absent, they should inform their program director **at least 2 hours before their assignment or clinical rotation begins.** Any approved missed clinical hours or assignments should be completed before graduation. Unapproved missed assignments or clinical hours will have points deducted due to tardiness.

Breaks and Meal Periods

During a clinical rotation that is less than 8 hours, the students will be permitted to take one 15-minute break at the clinical preceptor's discretion. During an 8+ hour clinical rotation, students will be permitted to take two 15-minute breaks and one 30-minute meal break at separate intervals. The first break should be taken during the first half of the rotation, the second break should be taken during the second half of the rotation, and the meal period can be taken at any time during the shift, but it cannot be combined with the 15-minute breaks for a longer meal period. Breaks and meal periods need to be approved by the clinical preceptor for that specific day. Students should not leave for breaks or meal periods without informing their preceptor. The timing of the breaks and meal periods may vary slightly day-to-day because breaks are taken based on the workflow and workload. **Students will not be used to cover the absence of the preceptor during their break and meal periods. Students should have a preceptor with them in clinical areas at all times.**

Smoking, Eating, and Drinking

The use of cigarettes or tobacco products, such as vapes, are not allowed on TMH campuses. **EATING AND DRINKING ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED IN THE TECHNICAL AREAS OF THE LABORATORY.** This includes candy and gum. Eating and drinking should only be done in assigned break areas that will be shown to the students during their first week of clinical rotations. The three main break areas include: the laboratory breakroom, the main hospital cafeteria, and the café in Mustian Center. Students may store their food and drinks in the laboratory refrigerator if their consumables are labeled with their name and a date. The laboratory will not be held responsible for discarded food or containers that are over one week old or unlabeled. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of their food items and containers that are stored in the refrigerators.

Dress Code

A professional appearance is mandatory for all students. Laboratory staff and students handling patient specimens are required to wear scrubs. The scrubs can be any color, but they should be clean, in good repair, and fit properly. Team members are expected to maintain good hygiene with clean and well-groomed hair, including facial hair. Fingernails should be natural and less than 1/3 inch long due to potential biohazard exposure. Team members must cover tattoos with disparaging, profane language, or offensive graphic imagery. Shoes must be safe for the work environment and align with Infection Prevention guidelines. Shoes should be comfortable, rubber soled, fluid resistant and cover the entire foot. Canvas shoes or open holed shoes are not appropriate due to possible exposure to biohazardous materials. Students will be furnished with lab coats and must be worn while on the bench. These laboratory coats are to be removed before leaving the laboratory and kept out of designated clean areas, such as the break room and main hospital hallways.

Professionalism

All TMH team members are expected to behave professionally during all interactions with patients, visitors, and members of the healthcare team. Behavior that is considered unprofessional will not be tolerated. Any unprofessional behavior by students or team members should be reported to the program director.

Cheating

Cheating is defined as someone behaving in a dishonest way to get what they want. Cheating will not be tolerated in this program. During examinations, students are expected to answer questions honestly without consulting notes, books, lectures, the internet, other students, or TMH lab employees. Integrity is expected with all virtual examinations and assignments. Additionally, the use of AI to complete assignments is considered cheating and will not be tolerated. All assessments need to be completed in the student's own words or writing.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability ACT (HIPAA) is a federal regulation regarding patient privacy. Maintaining patient privacy is everyone's responsibility. Violation of patient privacy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the program. Students will be required to sign a HIPAA acknowledgement.

Code of Conduct

Students must review and abide by Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare's Code of Conduct, which include topics on:

1. Providing quality care and services.
2. Treating employees fairly.
3. Complying with laws, regulations, and standards.
4. Respecting and protecting patient confidential information.
5. Maintaining integrity in coding, billing, and collection practices.
6. Avoiding conflicts of interest between individuals and TMH.
7. Safeguarding assets, property, and information.
8. Maintaining a safe environment for patients, staff, and visitors.

Disciplinary Actions

State of Florida Grounds for Disciplinary Actions

Students are licensed as trainees by the State of Florida and are expected to follow the statutes set in place by the State of Florida. Therefore, the grounds for disciplinary action against clinical laboratory personnel as stated in **Florida Statute 483.825** will be grounds for disciplinary and/or legal action against the student. These statutes can be found on the Florida Board of Clinical Laboratory Personnel website, and they will be discussed during the Intro to MLS course.

Program Grounds for Disciplinary Actions

1. Unprofessional conduct of any kind will subject a student to disciplinary measures, which may include dismissal. All students are expected to act in a responsible manner and maintain a professional attitude at all times while on the hospital's grounds. Self-discipline and sensitivity to the rights and interests of others are the principal elements of our program objectives.
2. Unacceptable conduct includes (1) persistent and deliberate disregard of rules and regulations set in place by any governing agency (2) persistent and deliberate disregard of the policies and procedures set in place by the program, laboratory, and/or hospital (3) disrespect towards faculty, staff, patients, visitors, and/or peers.
3. Each student is expected to earn their program certificate on personal effort without any form of academic dishonesty or cheating.

Warnings / Dismissal

Disciplinary action is warranted if a student cannot follow the rules and regulations of hospitals and labs, or if they cannot follow policies and procedures of TMH, the laboratory, or the certificate program. The program director, faculty, and advisory committee will discuss any unacceptable performance or behavior with the student. A record of counseling and/or disciplining will be kept in the student's file. Students have the right to appeal disciplinary actions.

Disciplinary measures constitute the following:

1st Offense:	**Verbal warning**
2nd Offense:	**1st Written warning**
3rd Offense:	**2nd Written warning**
4th Offense:	**Dismissal from the program**

Probation and Suspension

Students will be placed on probation and observed for a month with each written warning. In the event students do not improve after the written warnings, they may be suspended up to 5 days and will be required to make-up assignments or clinical hours prior to graduation. For extreme offenses, such as adverse safety events, students may be immediately suspended. In the event of dismissal or suspension from the program, the student will not be guaranteed re-entry during the next round of admissions. The selection committee will review all prior student records before determining whether the student may be eligible for re-entry into the program.

Grievances and Appeals

If students have a concern, complaint, or dissatisfaction regarding the MLS program, faculty, or staff then they may submit a grievance form to the PD. The grievance form must be submitted within 7 calendar days of the occurrence. Written responses will be returned to the student within 7 calendar days. Should the grievance be directed at the PD, the grievance form should be submitted to the lab director. Students who submit grievances will not be interfered with nor retaliated against. The health and safety of students and staff are the program's primary concern. If the student considers the grievance unresolved, the PD or laboratory director and other members of the advisory committee will review all information and provide another response. If the student still considers the grievance unresolved, they have the right to appeal any decisions to HR. Appeals must be submitted in writing within 7 calendar days of the last action taken. Decisions of HR are final.

General Policies & Procedures

Holidays and Breaks

Students will be entitled to take-off hospital recognized holidays, including **New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day**. Additionally, students are given a 1-week winter break and a 1-week spring break that can be taken at the student's requested dates. Please inform the program director of these requested dates during the first week of school.

General Time-Off

Students are allotted a maximum of **40 hours** of general time-off, which includes illnesses and personal requests. For scheduled time off, a written request must be submitted and approved by the program director. Any approved missed assignments or clinical hours will need to be completed before graduation. However, *unapproved* missed assignments or clinical hours will have points deducted due to tardiness.

The last week of the program will be allotted for preparing for the board examinations and completing any missed clinical hours. However, due to the nature and schedule of our program, we may not be able to accommodate more than 1 week of time-off.

Severe Weather Events

In the event of severe weather events, hospital administration will decide whether to "lockdown" the hospital, which means that no staff or students should report to the hospital due to unsafe driving conditions. The program director will be responsible for keeping students informed of inclement weather and hospital lockdown status. In the event of road closures, flooding, or other severe weather events that did not initiate a lockdown status but affects the safety of the student, the student should inform the program director ASAP that they are unable to safely report to their clinical site.

Temporary Campus Closure

In the event students are not permitted on TMH campuses, lectures and exams will continue virtually. Depending on the length of closure, the lecture schedule may be modified to cover more material per day. Completing more didactic material virtually will allow more time in clinical rotations upon return to campus. In extreme circumstances, graduation may need to be postponed to make-up excessive lost time. If necessary and possible, videos may supplement training.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

No form of harassment or discrimination based on age, race, color, creed, religion, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, or any other classification prohibited by law, will be permitted. Each allegation of harassment or discrimination will be promptly investigated in accordance with applicable TMH policies.

Anti-Hazing Policy

Hazing of students will not be tolerated by this administration. Any allegation of hazing towards students based on student organization or educational level will be promptly investigated by the TMH and MLS program administration.

Event Reporting

An event is any occurrence that represents a departure from the norm, an unexpected event, or an event with an unfavorable outcome. Events should be immediately reported to the program director and department supervisor/manager who will report the event in the healthcare system. Depending on the circumstances, students may need to make a claim under their liability insurance.

Information Management

Students must read, sign off, and abide by TMH's information system's policies and procedures. Any computer - related questions should be directed to the Service Desk at **Extension 15272.**

MLS Faculty & Personnel

The MLS certificate program will appoint qualified and certified faculty. Faculty members will be chosen at the discretion of the program director, the department manager, and the laboratory director. Administration will not discriminate faculty appointments based on age, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, or any other classification. Appointed faculty must meet the necessary requirements for their position. They must demonstrate proficiency and expertise in their subject matter and the ability to instruct at the appropriate level. The PD will ensure and document ongoing professional development and assessment of the faculty.

The faculty may assist the program director with any of these items: course instruction, course and program feedback, curriculum development, course selection(s), policy and procedure design or implementation, program outcome assessments, and program evaluations. Faculty members are responsible for monitoring student's learning experiences, assessments, evaluations, grades, attendance, and behavior. Faculty should immediately report any student issues in these areas to the program director. Additionally, administration and faculty members are expected to be involved with the monthly advisory committee meetings, whether it is in-person, virtually, or digitally.

During the clinical rotations, faculty will ensure that all tasks performed by students are done under qualified supervision and that the student does not replace qualified staff.

Faculty will ensure that there is a ratio of 1 clinical preceptor for every 3 students throughout clinical rotations. However, 1:1 ratio is ideal, but it may not always be possible. The program director will also ensure that the instructor to student ratio is 1:10 in all didactic areas.

MLS Program Administration at TMH

Medical Lab Director: **Kenneth Whithaus, MD**
Laboratory Director: **Xian Feng, MD**
Program Director: **Ashley Humphries, MSHS, MLS (ASCP)**

MLS Faculty Roster

Personnel Name	Title	Certifications	Program Position(s)
Donna Hicks	BS	ASCP, SBB, CLT (FL)	One Blood, Inc., Blood Bank clinical preceptor
Chase Stephenson	BS	ASCP, CLT (FL)	TMH Instructor, Hematology
Judith Floyd	BS	ASCP, CLT (FL)	TMH Instructor, Blood Bank
Ariana Kimbler	BS	ASCP, CLT (FL)	TMH Instructor, Microbiology

Program Quality Improvement Plan & Assessments

Monthly: The Program Director will collect surveys from each student, supervisor, and faculty member to identify any issues with the course material, lab assignments/resources, and the student's understanding of the coursework. At the end of the month, the PD will present the data to the advisory committee. If any weaknesses are identified, the PD will implement changes based on the advisory committee's suggestions. Any changes will be followed for effectiveness.

Annually (at the end of each cohort): The PD will evaluate graduation rates, attrition rates, placement rates and certification pass rates. The PD will have records of students' personal and alternative phone numbers, permanent addresses, and personal emails to keep in touch with the students after graduation. Around 6 months after graduation, the students will be given a survey to evaluate the total effectiveness of the program and how it contributed to success in their career. If any weaknesses are identified, the PD will implement changes based on the advisory committee's suggestions. Any changes will be followed for effectiveness. Since our program has not yet had a cohort, we have no data to present. In 2026, we will present the annual data in this section.

Program Affiliations

- **One Blood, Inc.** will be a clinical affiliate for blood bank rotations. They will also provide blood bank training supplies and videos for educational purposes.

Program Licensure & Accreditation Status

Licensure Status

License #: TP332

Our laboratory is licensed as a training program through the Florida Clinical Laboratory Science (CLS) Board, operating under the Department of Health. A month before each semester begins, the PD will register students as trainees through the Florida CLS Board. Additionally, the PD will re-apply to the Florida CLS Board annually.

Department of Health
Board of Clinical Laboratory Personnel
4052 Bald Cypress Way Bin C-07
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3258
(850) 488-0595

Accreditation Status

To sit for national board exams, students must have completed a program that is either nationally accredited or "in serious applicant status" with the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Science (NAACLS). *Currently, the program director is working diligently with NAACLS to become accredited, but we have not yet obtained accreditation or "serious applicant" status.* After we submit our Self-Study (circa Winter 2026), we will obtain "serious applicant status" with NAACLS so that our first round of graduating students will be eligible to sit for the national board examinations.

NAACLS
5600 N. River Rd., Suite 720
Rosemont, IL 60018-5119
(773) 714-8880

Facilities & Equipment

TMH and Laboratory Facilities

MLS students will have access to TMH facilities including free parking, a cafeteria with multiple food options, a coffee shop, a gift shop, multiple private quiet rooms for pumping or relaxation, multiple conference rooms, access to HR, and a computer lab at the education center. Additionally, the students will have access to the laboratory's facilities including a breakroom and locker rooms. The educational facilities in the laboratory include dedicated spaces for instruction, student workstations, and access to clinical areas for hands-on training.

Laboratory Equipment

TMH's laboratory is fully equipped with advanced instrumentation and analyzers across all major laboratory disciplines, including chemistry, immunology, urinalysis, hemostasis, hematology, blood gas, microbiology, and Point of Care. These resources ensure students gain experience with modern instrumentation that align with industry standards and prepare students for diverse workplace settings.

Student Services

Emergency Health Events

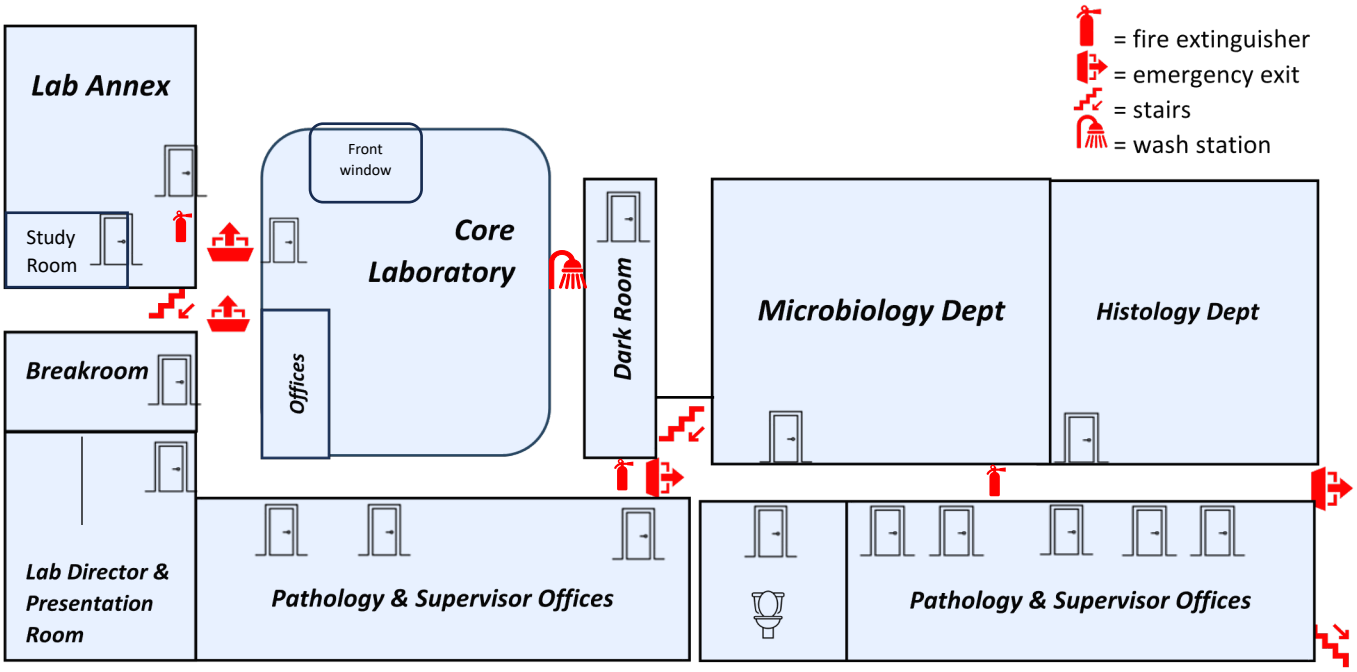
Should an emergent health event occur, students may present to the Bixler Emergency Department using their personal health and/or liability insurance. The program director and/or supervisor of the department must be immediately notified of any safety events affecting student health.

Human Resources (HR)

If the Grievance process does not resolve student grievances, they may escalate the issue to HR.

Maps

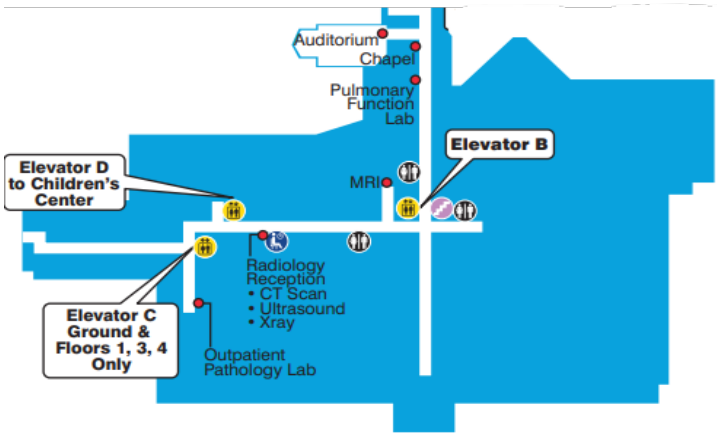
TMH Laboratory (*Figure 1*)



Campus Map of Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (*Figure 2*)

Map of Ground Floor (*Figure 3*)

Map of 1st Floor (*Figure 4*)



Directions to the Lab from P2 or P3 parking deck *(Refer to Figures 3 & 4)*:

- Proceed to Elevator F to ground floor.
- Go through the atrium to the main hospital.
- Take elevator C to the 1st floor.
- Turn left out of the elevator and the lab will be at the end of the hallway.
- The lab is a secure area and can only be accessed with an approved badge or escort.

Directions to the Lab from Parking Lot C:

Refer to Figure 2:

- Park in C Lot. No parking decal required.

Refer to Figures 3 &4:

- Ride the bus to the colleague entrance by the auditorium.
- Enter through double doors to the left of the auditorium.
- Go down the entrance hallway and turn right at the double doors.
- Go down the hallway until you see B elevator on the right and stairs on the left.
- Take the stairs or B elevator up to the 1st floor.
- From the stairs, go straight past B elevators and follow signs to Radiology.
- From the elevator, make a hard right and follow signs to Radiology.
- Go past D & C elevators, and radiology department. The lab will be the next department.
- The laboratory is a secure area and can only be accessed with an approved badge or escort.

MLS Certificate Program Application Form

Date | Full Name

Preferred Name(s)

Your payment plan *(check one)*: ☐ Out-of-pocket ☐ TMH agreement

Contact Information

Cell Phone Number | Personal Email | Emergency Contact Phone Number

Permanent Address

City | State | ZIP Code

Education Information

Degree & Major | College Name & Graduation Date

Application Checklist

☐	Have you submitted a cover letter and a resume?	☐	Have you requested 2 letters of recommendation sent on official letterhead or professional email from a supervisor or science professor?
☐	Have you requested your college/university transcript(s)? ***Date requested from your previous school(s): _____***	☐	Have you ever been convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation? ***If so, please list details in the comment section below.***
☐	Do you have health and liability insurance, and have you sent a copy of their records? ***Required before classes begin.***	☐	Are there any courses that do not appear on your transcript, but you will complete prior to MLS program? ***If so, list in comment section below.***
☐	Are you a citizen or do you have authorization to work in the United States?	☐	If signing agreements with TMH in lieu of payment, has the agreement and promissory note been signed? ***Required before classes begin.***

Additional Comments

TMH Laboratory
Attn: Ashley Humphries
1300 Miccosukee Rd
Tallahassee, FL, 32308

850.431.2750

ashley.humphries@tmh.org

YOUR HOSPITAL FOR *life*

TALLAHASSEE MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE