

Essential Functions

The accrediting agency for the Clinical Laboratory Science Program (the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences or NAACLS) mandates that students be informed of essential functions necessary to perform activities related to the major and the practice of clinical laboratory sciences. Students should demonstrate:

1. **Visual/Observational Skills** (with corrective lenses as needed) such that they will be able to: read laboratory procedures; view and articulate with a computer keyboard and screen; use a microscope to distinguish elements in blood and body fluids (whether stained or unstained) as to size, structure, color and intensity; “accurately observe demonstrations and exercises in which biological fluids and products are being tested for their biochemical, hematological, immunological, microbiological and histochemical components; and characterize color, odor, clarity and viscosity of biologicals, reagents, or chemical reaction products. In summary, the applicant must be able to possess functional use of the senses of smell, vision and somatic sensation.” (NAACLS News)
2. **Physical Mobility Skills/Eye-HandCoordination** (with assisting device if needed) so that:
 - a. all parts of the laboratory may be accessed by the student
 - b. laboratory shelves, fire alarms, bedsides, and telephones could be reached
 - c. travel to various clinical sites is feasible
 - d. moderately taxing physical work may be performed, often continuously, with prolonged sitting and/or standing in some areas
 - e. both culture and phlebotomy supplies can be maneuvered to safely collect specimens from patients
 - f. laboratory devices (pipettes, syringes, test tubes, keyboards) and instruments can be safely controlled to perform analyses
 - g. reasonable care and emergency treatment can be provided to patients if appropriate
3. **Manual dexterity skills** to safely hold and manipulate laboratory devices as small as a sewing needle and thread.
4. **Communication skills**, both oral and written, so that:
 - a. both verbal and nonverbal communications can be given to and received from coworkers and patients, and handled in a confidential, effective, efficient and sensitive manner.
 - b. telephone and other devices may be appropriately responded to in a emergency
 - c. technical and professional materials may be read and comprehended
 - d. both oral and written instructions may be followed in the correct order to independently perform laboratory analyses
 - e. papers and laboratory reports may be independently written
 - f. practical and paper examinations may be completed, often by computer

A hearing impaired applicant should be aware that most clinical laboratory environments require candidates for employment to demonstrate hearing ability with any type of auditory aid so that a normal level of speaking voice could be heard without viewing the lips of the speaker.
5. **Intellectual capacity** to be able to comprehend, calculate, measure, synthesize, integrate, analyze, and apply all aspects of the body of knowledge necessary for a laboratory scientist. They must also be able to compare and analyze, to accept criticism, and to alter performance if necessary.
6. **Behavioral skills**, such that:
 - a. tasks are completed within a realistic time frame
 - b. emotional health is conducive to application of intellect and good judgment
 - c. tasks, often multiple in nature, may be completed, even in a stressful and distracting environment
 - d. professional situations may be responded to in a flexible and creative manner
 - e. safety hazards and situations will be recognized and responded to accordingly to minimize risk to self and others
 - f. cooperation among students and other professionals toward an accepted goal of patient care is demonstrated
 - g. standards of ethics, compassion, honesty, and responsibility are not compromised. This applies to the student’s own as well as others’ responsibility to be forthright concerning possible errors, to evaluate behaviors, and to improve or help others to improve.
 - h. conduct and interactions with other students, faculty, clinical affiliate staff, patients and the public are professional, appropriate, considerate and tactful. Alcohol or other substance abuse is not tolerated within the clinical laboratory science field. Likewise, use of any alcohol/drugs is inadmissible in any academic setting, including classrooms, laboratories, and clinical settings. Use or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in any of these settings is grounds for dismissal from the program.
7. **Sufficient health** such that participation in program activities does not endanger the student or others.