

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the MLS Clinical Year and Application

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1. Who can apply to the MLS clinical program?

Students in the BS-MLS must complete the clinical program to complete their BS-MLS degree. Other students who are completing a bachelor's degree or who have earned a bachelor's degree and have successfully completed certain science pre-requisite courses may apply to the Certificate program to complete the clinical program which enables them to gain technical skills for job entry and to become eligible to sit for the national board exam. Admission to the clinical year is not guaranteed: it is competitive and requires separate application.

2. What does the clinical portion of the program involve?

During clinicals, students gain technical proficiency and professional experience by working in clinical laboratories. Locations and schedules vary depending on the corresponding content the student is learning. Students will also take MLS clinical-year courses delivered in different formats: online, demonstration, traditional classroom lecture, collaborative learning and in laboratory settings. Students will spend certain days during the semesters in the laboratory under the supervision and guidance of Medical Laboratory Scientists. These experiences are required as part of courses and are not paid.

3. Do MLS clinicals start any time of the year?

No. Clinicals start only in the fall semester. Students must apply by the posted deadline that occurs in the fall semester the year before students would start clinicals.

4. How long does the clinical portion of the program last?

Three full-time semesters starting in the fall. Students complete clinicals and graduate at the end of the summer semester. Students may petition to complete clinicals part-time or thru a Co-op option, both of which require additional time to complete clinicals.

5. Why would someone do clinicals part time?
Attending part-time can be a good option for students with other significant obligations, such as full-time work or family/care-giving.
6. How long does it take complete clinicals part-time?
Five or six semesters. Program staff will provide individual guidance on scheduling and clinical placement to ensure that all required courses and clinical requirements are completed.
7. How do students indicate an interest in doing clinicals part-time?
The application has a question asking you to select any options you are willing to do for clinicals: full-time, part-time or Co-op. Once students have confirmed their acceptance to clinicals, we ask them to finalize their decision about attending. Once a student starts a part-time or Co-op option, they cannot change to the full-time option, so we support students making the best decision for their circumstances. The availability of part-time positions is dependent on availability of space. Students interested in this option should discuss this with the program during the application process.
8. Can students change from part-time or Co-op to full-time?
Clinical-year courses are offered on a cohort-schedule and are not offered every semester. Changes in tracks are sometimes permitted. Several factors have to be considered which include academic performance, student laboratory space and clinical laboratory space. Additionally, courses are taught only once per year, so students switching tracks may need to wait until the course is offered again.
9. How does the Co-op option work?
Students doing Co-op take an alternating schedule for two years, taking clinical courses and requirements in one semester followed by one semester of paid work. Program staff will provide individual guidance on scheduling and clinical placement to ensure that all required courses and clinical requirements are completed.
10. What are the pros and cons of doing the Co-op option?
The primary benefit is getting paid to work during the working semesters. MLS differs from some other majors where Co-op might significantly increase your chances of employment after graduation: the job outlook for the MLS profession is growing much faster than average (US Bureau of Labor Statistics) and most of our clinical students find jobs near the end of their clinical year or shortly after graduation. The main downside of doing Co-op is the added time to degree; however, some students see this offset by the opportunity to earn money to pay for college.
11. How do students indicate an interest in doing the Co-op option?
The application has a question asking you to select any options you are willing to do for clinicals: full-time, part-time or Co-op. Once students have confirmed their acceptance to clinicals, we ask them to finalize their decision about attending. Once a student starts a part-time or Co-op option, they cannot change to the full-time option, so we support students making the best decision for their

circumstances. (See Q&A above for *Can students change from part-time or Co-op to full-time?*)

12. How many students are admitted to clinicals each year?

The MLS program currently has approximately 20-22 clinical spaces and spaces in the student laboratory. We do not accept more students than we are able to place in the clinical laboratory.

13. Why is admission to the clinical year competitive?

Several factors are influencing the admission process, mainly, a steady increase in applications for a limited number of clinical placements. As the profession gains visibility, competition has increased dramatically to get into MLS programs nationwide, not just in our program. For the last several years, the number of qualified applicants has exceeded the number of clinical spots available, forcing us to make difficult admission decisions. We expect this trend to continue, as we have some indication of how many qualified UC MLS majors will be applying next year, and we also do not anticipate an increase in the number of clinical spots. (See the Q&A on statistics from recently admitted students.)

14. Are some applicants given priority for admissions?

Yes, when we evaluate applicants, priority is given to UC students majoring in MLS. Other students are admitted on a space-available basis. The next group given priority is students at other universities having affiliate agreements with the UC MLS program, followed by all other applicants, including those applying to the certificate program. We must prioritize placing our own majors into clinicals, so if the number of qualified UC MLS majors exceeds the number of clinical spots available, we do not have space to admit affiliate or certificate students.

15. How are applicants evaluated for admissions?

All applicants are evaluated on their GPAs, cumulative (overall) and Math/Science. (See Q&A on how GPAs are calculated.) Students are invited to interview based on their GPA rank, with priority given to UC MLS majors considering the number of clinical spots available. Not all students are invited to interview. Students invited to interview are additionally evaluated on their interview/overall impression, their answers to a written questionnaire and their references.

16. How are GPAs calculated?

We factor grades taken from every course taken – this may include courses that are not applying to your current program. For the math/science GPA, we do treat repeated courses as if grade replaced/forgiven, whether or not they are official grade replacements: we take the higher of two grades for exact courses only. Students should indicate in the related application question if they have taken any course more than once to alert us to use the higher of the two grades. In the event that personal circumstances affected a student's performance in a course(s), we ask that the student explain these circumstances on the clinical application. (See Q&A for statistics of recently admitted students.)

17. What is the interview like?

Select students are invited to participate in a group project interview where they work on a group project as part of a small team while under observation by an admission panel consisting of MLS faculty and staff. Students participating in the interview are also given a written questionnaire to submit for evaluation.

18. What statistics are available from recently admitted students?

In the last application round for clinical students starting in the 2016-17 year, we received approximately 35 applications. Some of these were incomplete and several non-UC students withdrew their application. The average GPAs of admitted students were 3.25 cumulative (overall) and 3.12 Math/Science.

19. Can students denied admission re-apply for the following year?

Yes. We recommend students work with an advisor to determine any strategies possible to strengthen their GPA, possibly by repeating courses where lower grades were earned.

20. What happens if a UC student majoring in MLS doesn't get into clinicals?

Students denied to clinicals have several options, including re-applying the following year or changing to another major to complete their degree and graduate. Students should work with their advisor on an academic plan to determine courses to take in the interim (possible grade replacements to strengthen reapplication or courses toward another program). Given the competitive nature of clinical admissions, we strongly recommend students work closely with an advisor as soon as they begin contemplating the major and throughout their time in the major, to assess the strength of their clinical application and to always identify a viable alternate program in case they don't get into clinicals.

21. Is there any advice for students to deal with the competitive nature of clinical admissions?

- Apply with the strongest grades possible. Work closely with an advisor early on to track GPAs and discuss the feasibility of repeating courses where lower grades were earned.
- Avoid foreclosure (facing a dead-end because your only plan was getting into UC MLS clinicals) by having an alternate plan to graduate and achieve your career goals. Work with your advisor to explore related occupations – not all lab work requires an MLS degree or board certification.
- Apply to more than one program. Search for MLS program types by state on the NAACLS website in the Programs section: <http://www.naacls.org/search/programs.asp>

22. How long will it take to complete the clinical application?

In the application package, we provide a timeline of minimal time needed to complete the different components of the clinical application. You will have several "To Dos" and things will be sent to the program separately (references, the application and forms, transcripts if needed and fall semester

grades once posted).

23. What types of references are required?

We ask for three, at least two of which should be from science or lab instructors. Another good reference is someone who has worked with you, either in paid or volunteer work, ideally as your supervisor although this is not required. References cannot be family members, even if they are instructors, work colleagues or medical professionals.

24. Can my advisor serve as a reference?

If your advisor can speak to your abilities from 1) teaching you in a science or lab course or 2) working with you: Yes. If not, we recommend you find a science/lab instructor or work reference, because we deduct points on your application evaluation for references that don't comply with instructions.

25. How do I ask someone to fill out my reference form?

Rather than simply asking "Will you serve as a reference for me?" or worse, sending the form and just assuming the person will complete it, it is best to briefly explain what the reference is for and then asking if the person feels they know you well enough that they could serve as a reference for you. This allows them the opportunity to decline or to admit if they could not honestly provide a strong reference.

Allow enough time for your reference to handle your request – a month is standard to respect their busy schedules. Follow-up with them one week before the due date you agreed upon to see if they need any additional information from you (this also reminds them to complete the reference form if they haven't already done so). For more information, search for one of the many guides on the internet on *etiquette of requesting references/recommendations*.

26. How do I know if my reference turned in their referral form?

We suggest that you ask them to let you know with a brief email when they've mailed it. If you don't receive one, you can always follow-up with them to ask if they returned it.

27. Do I have to apply to complete the general UC application?

No, applicants do not need to complete the general UC application.

28. Is there an application fee to apply to the MLS program?

No, we do not charge an application fee.

29. Are transcripts required to be sent with my application?

Non-UC students must request official transcripts be sent from the Registrar of schools they have attended. Please refer to detailed instructions about transcripts in the application packet. In short, all students who are not currently attending UC must send official transcripts from their institution's Registrar's office. UC students need transcripts for courses taken at other universities if they were

not previously sent to UC.

30. Do UC students need to send transcripts?

In most cases, no. We have access your official record of UC courses which includes any courses taken at other colleges/universities that were previously sent to UC as official transcripts.

31. How do I know if UC has all of my transcripts?

When you send transcripts to UC, you will receive directions to access your online Credit Evaluation Report which lists courses UC has received through official transcripts and how those courses equate to UC courses. Sometimes courses are pending evaluation (UC is still determining how they equate to UC courses), and if so, students should check their CER later to see when all courses have been evaluated.

- Non-UC students can access their CER here:
<https://admissions.uc.edu/cer/UIUnAuth/ApplicantLogin.aspx>
- Current UC students can access their CER in One Stop / Personal Information.

32. Why are fall semester grades required and sent after the application deadline?

Given the number of applications we receive, we want to receive official transcripts by the posted deadline to allow adequate time to evaluate our applicants. The application deadline occurs before most fall semester grades have posted. Many students are taking science and other significant courses in the fall semester, so we want to include those grades for the most thorough evaluation of applicants.

33. Should I request my transcripts to be held and sent after fall semester grades post?

No, because we want to begin review of students' applications as soon as possible. Please send official transcripts so that UC receives them before the application deadline.

34. How do I send fall grades (do I need to request another official transcript)?

As soon as fall grades post, applicants must send an unofficial copy of their grade report showing current cumulative/overall GPA statistics. For UC applicants, this only applies if they took courses at another institution during the fall semester of application.

Grades can be obtained from the student's online grade report and can be copied/pasted into an email OR saved as a PDF. Send your grade report to the email address or fax number listed in the application packet.

We accept unofficial fall semester grades to expedite course evaluation and to save applicants the cost of sending additional transcripts. Once students are accepted into clinicals, we require complete official transcripts to verify any grades sent unofficially.

35. If I have questions not answered in the program website, application packet and FAQs, who should I contact?

Ms. Mel Woods, MLS Program Coordinator, at woodsm2@ucmail.uc.edu

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