

MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES



STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

College of Health Professions
Department of Health & Biomedical
Sciences 2022-2023

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY

MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE PROGRAM STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS 2022 - 2023

This publication contains summary information only and is not a compilation of the official rules, regulations, or policies of The University of Texas system or The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley. All official rules, regulations, and policies are published in the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System and the Handbook of Operating Procedures and Catalog of The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley.

This Manual of "Standards and Expectations" was prepared on the basis of the best information available at the time. The administration and faculty of the Medical Laboratory Sciences Program reserve the right to change any information in keeping with the policies of the University and in conformance with the rules and regulations of the Essentials of the National Accrediting Agency for Medical Laboratory Science Programs. This Manual of "Standards and Expectations for Students" is in addition to the Student Guide of the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley.

COVID-19

COVID-19 RESOURCES:

Please visit the [UTRGV COVID-19 Website](https://www.utrgv.edu/coronavirus/index.htm) via the following link for the most up-to-date information and resources (<https://www.utrgv.edu/coronavirus/index.htm>). This includes information on self-screening questions, links to forms for travel and contact, etc.

Instructions on self-screening and reporting are located on the UTRGV website: <https://www.utrgv.edu/coronavirus/index.htm>

Face Covering Protocol:

As part of the university's ongoing COVID-19 mitigation efforts to maintain a healthy environment for all members of our campus community, anyone entering a campus building must wear a face covering that covers the mouth and nose. The covering must be worn in all hallways, public spaces, research labs, teaching/computer labs, libraries, classrooms, automobiles with a passenger, stairwells, elevators and common areas, as well as office spaces. In office spaces, when social distancing of 6 feet is possible and maintained, face coverings may be removed. Face coverings also are required in outdoor settings when safe social distancing and gathering practices are not possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Vision Statement	6
Mission Statement	6
Program Goals	6
Learning Outcomes	6
Entry Level Competencies	7
Essential Functions	9
Admission Requirements	10
Student Guidance and Advising.....	11
Coursework Update	11
Advanced Placement	11
Professional Sequence Curriculum Outline	12
Clinical Affiliates	13
Financial Assistance	14
Counseling and Health Services	15
Disability Services	15
Certification	16
Professional Organizations	16
Code of Ethics	17
Pledge to the Profession/Faculty.....	18
University Policies	
1. General Statement of Standards Of Student Conduct	19
2. University Student Conduct & Discipline.....	20
3. Academic Appeals Procedures.....	33
4. Student Grievance and complaints.....	34
General Policies of the Medical Laboratory Science	
Program.....	36
1. CBC.....	36
2. Physical Exam	36
3. Liability/Health Insurance	36
4. Service Work	36
5. Attendance	37
6. Confidentiality	37
7. Grading	37
8. Program Standing	38
9. Readmission	38
10. Clinical Practicums	38
11. Dress Code	39
12. Testing	40
13. Transportation	40

14.	Safety	40
15.	Blood Borne Pathogens Exposure.....	41
16.	Accident Insurance.....	41
17.	Scholastic Dishonesty	41
18.	Student Records	42
19.	Student Association	42
20.	Degree Requirements	42
21.	Application for Graduation.....	42
22.	Email	43
23.	Classroom Courtesy	43
24.	Outside Employment	43
25.	Maximum Timeframe.....	43
26.	Urine Drug Testing.....	43
Appendix A	Vaquero Honor Code	45
Appendix B	Chemical Hygiene Plan	47
	Universal Precautions	52
	Basic Laboratory Safety Rules.....	57
	Verification of Receipt	61
Appendix C	Confidentiality Statement	62
Appendix D	Information Release	64
Appendix E	Outcomes Assessment Release	66
Appendix F	Standards and Expectations	68
	Verification of Receipt	69

INTRODUCTION

The Medical Laboratory Science Program is designed to prepare students to enter the field of Medical/Clinical Laboratory Science or Medical Technology. This is a profession in which the theoretical knowledge of biology and chemistry is applied in the diagnosis and treatment of disease, maintenance of health, organ transplantation and forensic investigation. It requires the exercise of independent judgement, correlation of test results, and interpretation of findings with respect to normal values.

The program culminates in a baccalaureate degree after three years of undergraduate pre-professional coursework and completion of the 15-month medical laboratory science program. The professional phase consists of a 9-month campus based portion and a 6-month segment of planned clinical experiences. During the on-campus phase, students learn the basic theory and techniques necessary to function in a clinical laboratory. This includes instruction in clinical chemistry, microbiology, urinalysis, immunology, immunohematology, hematology, molecular diagnostics, management, education and research. Following the on-campus portion, students are scheduled for clinical experiences at one or more clinical sites. It is during this time that students are given the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills gained on campus to actual patient care situations.

The program is accredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS)*. Upon successful completion of the program, students are eligible to take one or more of the nationally recognized certification exams.

This Manual is designed for use only by students in the Medical Laboratory Sciences Program at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. It contains information which should provide assistance to students as they enter and progress through the program. The Manual of "Standards and Expectations" is reviewed annually and suggestions for revision are welcome.

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MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE PROGRAM

Vision Statement

We strive to be a leader in the transformation of healthcare and the future growth of the South Texas Region through education, research and service.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Medical Laboratory Science Program is to provide a quality educational experience which prepares medical laboratory scientists for leadership roles in a multicultural health care system. Excellence in teaching is enhanced by faculty engaged in research, creative activities as well as professional service to the Profession, the University and the Community

Program Goals

The Medical Laboratory Sciences Program is designed to produce competent and qualified medical laboratory practitioners to meet the needs of the Rio Grande Valley and the State. It offers the student an opportunity to obtain the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to function as competent medical laboratorians. To these ends, the following goals have been established for the Program:

1. Provide a quality education to students enrolled in the medical laboratory science program that will allow them to perform as competent career entry professionals.
2. Provide a flexible curriculum, which meets the needs of the traditional as well as the non-traditional student.
3. Provide a curriculum that presents opportunities for students to develop leadership skills which will enable them to function as an integral part of the healthcare team.
4. Prepare students to meet the unique challenges of a multicultural border-health region.

Major Student Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate entry level knowledge and skills in the area of hematology.
2. Demonstrate entry level knowledge and skills in the area of clinical chemistry.
3. Demonstrate entry level knowledge and skills in the area of immunohematology.
4. Demonstrate entry level knowledge and skills in the area of clinical microbiology
5. Demonstrate entry level knowledge and skills in the area of immunology.
6. Demonstrate entry level knowledge and skills in the area of urinalysis and body fluids.

SUMMARY OF ENTRY LEVEL COMPETENCIES

In keeping with the overall mission and goals of the program, specific entry level competencies have been established which students should possess upon completion of the program:

1. Practice ethical standards in all areas related to medical information and patient care.
2. Practice appropriate communication skills for transmitting ideas and information as well as laboratory results to other health care professionals and the public.
3. Demonstrate a commitment to continuing education.
4. Apply current scientific/technical knowledge to the practice of medical laboratory science.
5. Determine specimen collection procedures based on test requests, analytical system requirements and patient status.
6. Establish an appropriate patient identification system.
7. Prepare the patient for in-vivo procedures including collection and injection.
8. Evaluate the patient's status before and during in-vivo procedures such as collection and injection.
9. Obtain and process specimens utilizing appropriate techniques.
10. Evaluate suitability of specimens for analysis.
11. Establish criteria for identifying unacceptable specimens and for recollection.
12. Establish and maintain systems for the accession, identification, transport, storage and disposal of specimens adhering to internal and external policies and regulations, including medico-legal considerations.
13. Recognize biohazardous material and handle according to appropriate safety requirements.
14. Process aliquots or components of specimens for analysis according to the type of specimen and/or procedure to be performed.
15. Determine the priority of laboratory requests and workload appropriately for optimal patient care and efficiency.
16. Perform tests according to prescribed methods utilizing efficient organization.
17. Calibrate and operate instruments and equipment using the appropriate materials and following established protocols.
18. Evaluate the validity of the test results in terms of reference intervals (normal ranges), quality control data, analytical system performance, correlations and interpretations with other test data and clinical significance relative to patient status.
19. Evaluate the need for performance of confirmatory/ additional procedures.
20. Record and report results and associated information through the appropriate systems.
21. Provide patients with blood and blood products in accordance with internal and external policies and regulations/standards.
22. Prepare blood components in accordance with internal and external policies and regulations/standards.

23. Utilize appropriate donor selection techniques and collect blood in accordance with internal and external policies and regulations/standards.
24. Establish and communicate short term and long range goals.
25. Monitor compliance with institutional policies and regulations/standards of external agencies.
26. Design a quality assurance program to monitor variables which affect the quality of laboratory services.
27. Select and establish test methods utilizing appropriate protocols, reagents, equipment and instruments essential to the specifications of the analysis.
28. Establish reference intervals appropriate to the test system and population.
29. Prepare and update procedure manuals.
30. Establish and evaluate safety measures in accordance with internal and external regulations.
31. Instruct personnel in the operation of instruments and equipment and the performance of methods and procedures.
32. Recognize, record and evaluate instrument or equipment malfunctions and procedure deviations.
33. Prepare and label chemical and biological reagents and materials according to directions.
34. Utilize appropriate methods of instruction in the education of clinical laboratory science students and in-service programs.
35. Exercise principles of management and supervision.
36. Evaluate LIS and apply principles of current information systems.

IMPORTANT

In compliance with the American with Disability Act, the Medical Laboratory Science program provides the following information to aid the applicant/student to determine whether reasonable modification will be needed. Admissions is not based on these standards.

Essential Functions

Visual:

- **Visual ability sufficient to differentiate colors, identify structures microscopically and read written materials**
 - a. Ability to observe characteristics from biological specimens including but not limited to color, clarity, etc.
 - b. Characterize reagents or chemical products, and the reactions they produce during routine analyses.
 - c. Comprehend text in the form of numbers, graphs letters etc. displayed on an electronic monitor and/or print in the English language.
 - d. Ability to operate a clinical microscope to distinguish various intricate structures such as cells and characteristics to categorize accurately for precise diagnosis of biological disorders/illnesses.

Motor Skills

- **Gross and fine motor skills necessary to manipulate laboratory instruments and equipment consistent with standard of medical laboratory practice**
 - a. Perform tasks that require the use of various analyzers and instruments to transmit data essential to patient care.
 - b. Dexterity necessary to use essential tools in a laboratory setting such as pipettes, analyzers, keyboards, computers, heat-fixed tools, loops, etc. as well as venipuncture procedures or other medical procedures

Communication Skills

- **Skills adequate for transmitting information to and from patients and other health professionals**
 - a. Provide instructions to patients
 - b. Communicate effectively in written and verbal forms
 - c. Ability to read, comprehend and follow instructions

Critical Skills

- **Intellectual attributes sufficient for clinical decision making including in emergency medical situations**
 - a. Identify unacceptable results and take appropriate action as well as locate sources of error

Behavioral

- **Behavioral attributes sufficient for working in a health care environment and providing patient care**
 - a. Ability to adapt to changes regarding technological advancements in healthcare and make critical decisions in times of emergencies and in high-stress environments.
 - b. Work efficiently to reflect swift turnaround times for specific duties and/or tasks.
 - c. Ability to respond ethically and honestly in all decisions including but not limited to:
 - i. Being honest with errors made in the laboratory or work field.
 - ii. Able to receive constructive criticism and self-evaluate for performance improvement.
 - iii. Ability to recognize potentially harmful outcomes to situations that may arise and work to limit harm to oneself and others through safety procedures and protocols.
 - d. If a student is diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder or mental health disorder, he/she may function as a medical laboratory science student if the condition is under control and/or under the care of a clinician. This will allow for accomplishment of the program's educational, psychomotor, and affective goals with or without reasonable accommodation. The student's functioning must oblige by required acceptable standards. In the case of a deteriorating event, the student must be willing to accept professional help before the event can pose danger to self, staff, colleagues, patients, or patient care.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete all prerequisite coursework and complete any necessary University admission requirements, if applicable, prior to entrance into the program. The pre-professional curriculum is composed of core requirements as well as 16 hours in biology including microbiology, and 12 hours in chemistry including inorganic and organic coursework and a college level math class. The professional phase of the program has a limited capacity and admission is competitive. Students must submit an application in the spring of their junior year along with three letters of reference, an application form and a college transcript. Admission is on a competitive basis and students will be accepted in rank order after evaluation of previous coursework, overall GPA, science GPA, essay and letters of reference. An admission interview is also required, but this is used to make sure that students understand the policies and requirements of the program. In no case, will students with less than an overall GPA of 2.0 and a science GPA of 2.0 be considered for admission.

Students should complete all non-medical laboratory science coursework prior to entering the professional phase of the program. Students who are lacking no more than two non-science prerequisite courses may be considered for admission if they have at least a minimum overall GPA of 3.0. Preference is given to students who have completed all prerequisite coursework.

Alternate Admission Pathways

A. A student who does not wish to receive a degree from The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley but who wishes to attend the professional portion of the curriculum must meet one of the following requirements:

1. International students, who already possess a foreign baccalaureate degree and seek entrance into the Medical Laboratory Science Program for certification purposes only, must meet all admission requirements of the University and must have their transcript evaluated by agencies acceptable to the National Certification Agencies. This evaluation must show that their degree is equivalent to a baccalaureate in the United States with appropriate coursework in biology, chemistry and math.
2. Students who already possess a baccalaureate degree and have a minimum of 12 semester hours of chemistry **including inorganic and organic** and 16 semester hours of biology including **microbiology** and a college level math course.
3. Students who have completed all pre-professional coursework with 16 semester hours of biology, including a course in Microbiology, 12 semester hours of chemistry including inorganic and organic coursework, 3 semester hours of college level Mathematics; and an affiliation agreement between the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley and his/her parent university stating that upon satisfactory completion of the Medical Laboratory

Sciences curriculum offered at The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley, the student will be awarded a baccalaureate degree.

B. A limited number of students who have completed all prerequisite coursework may apply to the program with a request to pursue coursework on a part-time basis.

STUDENT GUIDANCE AND ADVISING IN CLS PROGRAM

On the first day of classes, each student is assigned a faculty mentor. Each faculty mentor oversees 5-6 students. They meet with students at least once per month to see how they are progressing in their courses. If students are not performing to expectations, students receive a counseling form which notes that they are aware of their status in the program.

Students who experience difficulties and require counseling are referred to the on campus Counseling Center.

Students are also assigned a Big Sister/Big Brother from the senior class. The role of the Big Brother/Big Sister is to provide advice and guidance.

COURSEWORK UPDATE

Applicants who plan to utilize coursework more than seven years old in the areas of general chemistry or the biological sciences will be required to demonstrate an up-to-date knowledge in these areas. This may be accomplished by completion of at least one formal course in chemistry and one formal course in the biological sciences within the last five years with a grade of at least a C or one year of relevant recent experience in the field of medical laboratory science within the last five years.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Medical Laboratory Technicians with nationally recognized certification such as ASCP may be granted credit for the following courses after validation by challenge examination: CLSC 3310, 3630, 3513 and 3420. Students must attain a score of 70% or better on challenge exams. Challenge exams may only be attempted once. In addition, students may shorten the time required to complete the practicum courses by demonstrating required competency in designated skill areas through practical examinations. Students who desire credit by examination for medical laboratory science courses must notify the program director prior to their enrollment in these courses. Students must comply with University regulations and no more than 45 total hours may be granted for credit by examination, correspondence or exemption.

MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES Professional Sequence Curriculum Outline

FALL		
CLSC 3310	Hematology I	3
CLSC 3420	Clinical Chemistry I	4
CLSC 3513	Clinical Immun/Immunochem	5
CLSC 3630	Clinical Microbiology I	6
SPRING		
CLSC 4314	Adv. Immunohematology	3
CLSC 4411	Clinical Hematology II	4
CLSC 4521	Clinical Chemistry II	5
CLSC 4631	Clinical Microbiology II	6
SUMMER		
CLSC 4303	Med Lab Leadership	3
CLSC 4340	Clinical Practicum I	3
CLSC 4341	Clinical Practicum II	3
CLSC 4116	Advanced Immunology	1
FALL		
CLSC 4342	Clinical Practicum III	3
CLSC 4343	Clinical Practicum IV	3
CLSC 4144	Clinical Practicum V	1
CLSC 4122	Method Development & Research	1
CLSC 4200	Seminar	2
CLSC 4315	Molecular Genetics and Molecular Diagnostics	<u>3</u>
		59

Clinical practicum courses may not conform exactly to the University schedule.

CLINICAL AFFILIATES

The UTRGV Medical Laboratory Sciences Program is currently affiliated with eight local healthcare facilities. Students are placed at one or more of these sites for their clinical experiences. In addition, students may be placed for short periods of time at enrichment sites for the purpose of observing specialized procedures or techniques. Students must adhere to the rules and regulations of the clinical affiliates and there may be some differences as far as dress code or courtesy services extended to students. Requests for specific clinical assignment/placements will be considered, but due to scheduling considerations, the program cannot guarantee specific assignment/placements.

All students are responsible for their own travel arrangements to assigned clinical sites. A description of the current affiliate hospitals is provided below as well as the courtesy services which are available to students. **STUDENTS SHOULD NOTE THAT THESE DESCRIPTIONS WERE PROVIDED BY THE HEALTHCARE FACILITIES AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**

Clinical Affiliates

Doctors' Hospital at Renaissance 5501 S. McColl Rd Edinburg, TX 78539

Doctors' Hospital is a 530 bed acute care facility. It is accredited by Joint Commission, CAP and Medicare. The Hospital also has a Wound Care Center at Renaissance, the Rehab Center at Renaissance, The Women's Hospital at Renaissance, The Cancer Center at Renaissance, The Renaissance Behavioral Center and the Cancer Center at Renaissance at San Benito. Protective wear is provided for routine use in the laboratory.

Edinburg Regional Medical Center 1102 W. Trenton Road Edinburg, Texas

Edinburg is a 127 bed acute care facility located in Edinburg, Texas. It is accredited by Joint Commission, CAP and Medicare. The laboratory also serves Edinburg Children's Hospital which has an additional 100 beds available. The laboratory is computerized for live data entry. Students are not required to purchase lab coats as protective attire is furnished.

Knapp Medical Center 1401 E. 8th Street Weslaco, Texas

Knapp currently has approximately 227 beds and is a full service hospital. It is accredited by Joint Commission, CAP (College of American Pathologists) and Medicare. Students do not need to purchase a lab coat as they are supplied with protective attire for routine use in the laboratory.

McAllen Medical Center 301 West Expressway 83 McAllen, Texas

McAllen Medical Center is a full service hospital with approximately 441 beds at multiple sites. It is accredited by JCAHO, CAP, and Medicare. The laboratory is computerized. Students will need a clean, personal lab coat for professional identity when visiting other areas of the hospital, but lab coats for use in the laboratory are supplied for routine use.

Mission Regional Medical Center 900 S. Bryan Road Mission, Texas 78572

Mission Regional Medical Center is a full service hospital with 297 beds. The Hospital is accredited by CAP, JCAHO and Medicare. The laboratory and hospital are both fully computerized. Disposable lab coats are supplied for routine use in the laboratory.

Rio Grande Regional Hospital 101 E. Ridge Road McAllen, Texas

Rio Grande Regional is a 325 bed full service hospital. It is accredited by JCAHO, CAP and Medicare. The laboratory is computerized. Lunch is available to students at a reduced rate. Students are not required to purchase lab coats as protective wear is supplied for laboratory use.

Valley Baptist Medical Center 2101 Pease Street Harlingen, Texas

Valley Baptist is a 586 bed full service teaching hospital. It is accredited by JCAHO, CAP and Medicare. The laboratory is computerized. Lunch is provided at a reduced rate to students. Protective wear is provided for routine use in the laboratory, but students are required to purchase their own lab coat for use during their phlebotomy rotation.

Valley Regional Medical Center 100A E. Alton Gloor Blvd Brownsville, Texas

Founded as Valley Community Hospital in 1975, proudly serves Brownsville, TX and the surrounding communities in the Rio Grande Valley. It is an HCA Gulf Coast hospital accredited by JCAHO. Valley Regional Medical Center is a licensed 214-bed Facility with over 200 physicians representing more than 25 specialties. Disposable lab coats are supplied for routine use in the laboratory.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Scholarships and other forms of financial aid for students pursuing a career in medical laboratory sciences are available from several different sources. These may have different eligibility requirements, conditions and deadlines. Recipients of the scholarships and financial aid are determined solely by the sponsoring entity. Additional information and applications are available from the departmental secretary or program director. Students may also contact the sponsoring institution or professional organization. As a convenience to students, the following list of scholarship and financial aid sources is provided:

HRSA grant (2020-2025) funds 10 seniors and 10 juniors \$230,000/yr

Alpha Mu Tau Fraternity - National Award opens Nov1 deadline April 1

American Society of Clinical Pathologists - National Award of \$1000

Dorothy Clark Sproul Scholarship - Allied Health Student at UTPA

Edinburg Hospital Auxiliary - \$600 per semester

McAllen Medical Center Auxiliary - Educational assistance for tuition, books etc
from Auxiliary

Shari Hall Scholarship Fund - Texas Association for Clinical Laboratory Science-Rio
Grande District - \$500 scholarship for one local student
enrolled in the Medical Laboratory Science Program

The financial aid office at the University is also available to help students and has information on other sources of financial assistance. It is important that you submit the necessary paperwork early. If you anticipate needing financial aid during the summer, please discuss this with the financial aid office so that they can help you plan for your needs.

COUNSELING AND HEALTH SERVICES

The Learning Assistance Center offers counseling to students at no cost. Services include both group and individual counseling. All information discussed with the professional counselors is kept in strict confidence.

The Student Health Service is open five days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday. Various services are available to students at a reasonable cost including physical examinations, vaccinations, and minor accident/injury care. Call 956-665-2511 for more information about Student Health Services.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Disability Services office for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Student Accessibility Services office (DS), University Center #108. The office # is 956- 665-7005 and email is Reynaldo.reyes@utrgv.edu.

CERTIFICATION

Certification for baccalaureate prepared generalist practitioners has been conducted by a number of agencies. In July 2009, two of the largest agencies, The American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Registry (BOR) and the National Credentialing Agency for Laboratory Personnel (NCA) signed an agreement to form a single certification agency for medical laboratory professionals. The agency was called the ASCP Board of Certification (BOC). The agreement became effective Friday, October 23, 2009. As part of the agreement, baccalaureate level practitioners, who meet the qualifications, will be certified as MLS (ASCP) or Medical Laboratory Scientists. This represents a milestone in the evolution of the profession. On May 1, 2021 the UTRGV CLS program changed its name to Medical Laboratory Science (MLS).

Currently, there is no requirement for certification or licensure in the state of Texas, but hospitals and most other places of employment require appropriate certification. An application fee is required which is approximately \$240.00 and due upon applying.

Although licensure or certification is not required in Texas, several other states do require licensure of laboratory personnel including California, Florida, Nevada, Louisiana, Tennessee, Georgia, W. Virginia, Hawaii, North Dakota, New York and Rhode Island. In addition Puerto Rico has licensure requirements. Students anticipating a move to one of these areas should check on individual state requirements. The list of states requiring licensure is subject to change as many states currently have bills pending which address the qualifications of laboratory personnel. Please note New York is requiring 720 hours of clinical practicum experience.

Satisfactory completion of the entire program is necessary before the program can verify eligibility for the national certification exams. The program will not verify such eligibility when partial or incomplete work is recorded for any portion of the required academic or clinical course work.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The American Society for Medical Laboratory Science, formerly the American Society for Medical Technology, is a national professional association representing laboratory personnel. It is dedicated to serving the educational, economic, legislative and social needs of its members. The organization is open to students enrolled in a Medical Laboratory Science Program. Student membership dues are approximately \$25.00 per year and this includes membership in the state and local organizations. A partial list of benefits includes the professional journal, **Medical Laboratory Science**, reduced fees for workshops and meetings, low-cost insurance and eligibility for scholarships. In addition, after graduation, students are eligible for active status at one-half the normal fee for one year. Students are required to join ASCLS as a part of professional leadership.

ASCP (American Society for Clinical Pathologists) also offers free membership to students. You must be a member of ASCP in order to qualify for ASCP awards.

CODE OF ETHICS
American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (1995)

Preamble

The Code of Ethics of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS) sets forth the principles and standards by which medical laboratory professionals practice their profession.

I. Duty to the Patient

Medical laboratory professionals are accountable for the quality and integrity of the laboratory services they provide. This obligation includes maintaining individual competence in judgment and performance and striving to safeguard the patient from incompetent or illegal practice by others. Medical laboratory professionals maintain high standards of practice. They exercise sound judgment in establishing, performing and evaluating laboratory testing.

Medical laboratory professionals maintain strict confidentiality of patient information and test results. They safeguard the dignity and privacy of patients and provide accurate information to other health care professionals about the services they provide.

II. Duty to Colleagues and the Profession

Medical laboratory professionals uphold and maintain the dignity and respect of our profession and strive to maintain a reputation of honesty, integrity and reliability. They contribute to the advancement of the profession by improving the body of knowledge, adopting scientific advances that benefit the patient, maintaining high standards of practice and education, and seeking fair socioeconomic working conditions for members of the profession.

Medical laboratory professionals actively strive to establish cooperative and respectful working relationships with other health professionals with the primary objective of ensuring a high standard of care for the patients they serve.

III. Duty to Society

As practitioners of an autonomous profession, medical laboratory professionals have the responsibility to contribute from their sphere of professional competence to the general well being of the community.

Medical laboratory professionals comply with relevant laws and regulations pertaining to the practice of medical laboratory science and actively seek, within the dictates of their consciences, to change those which do not meet the high standards of care and practice to which the profession is committed.

PLEDGE TO THE PROFESSION

As a medical laboratory professional, I strive to:

- Maintain and promote standards of excellence in performing and advancing the art and science of my profession;
- Preserve the dignity and privacy of patients;
- Uphold and maintain the dignity and respect of our profession;
- Seek to establish cooperative and respectful working relationships with other health professionals; and
- Contribute to the general well being of the community

I shall demonstrate my commitment to these responsibilities throughout my professional life.

Faculty

Daniela Gill, MSHS, MLS(ASCP)^{cm}, Clinical Assistant Professor, Program Director

Maria Teresa Aguirre, M.S., MT(ASCP), Clinical Assistant Professor

Robert Gilkerson, Ph.D., Associate Professor

Cristal Villarreal, MBA, MLS(ASCP)^{cm}, SH(ASCP)^{cm} Clinical Assistant Professor

Beverly Briones, MSHS, MLS(ASCP)^{cm}, Clinical Assistant Professor

Virginia Miller, MSHS, MLS(ASCP)^{cm}, Clinical Assistant Professor

Karina M. Camano Villegas, MSHS, MLS(ASCP), PT Lecturer

Santhosh Mathew, MS, MLS(ASCP), PT Lecturer

Sandra Tijerina, M.S. MLS (ASCP)^{cm}SBB, SH(ASCP)^{cm}, Program Director/Assoc. Prof.,
Retired May 31, 2021.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

University policies related to student conduct, academic and nonacademic appeals are consistent with those in effect for all students enrolled in The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley and can be found in The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley Handbook of Operating Procedures STU 02-100 and STU 02-200 and the University Undergraduate Catalog.

1. General Statement of Standards of Student Conduct: University Policy

The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley considers cultivation of self-discipline by its students to be of great importance in the development of responsible citizens. Therefore, the University expects its students to maintain standards of personal discipline that are in harmony with the educational goals and purpose of the University.

Although the University is committed to the full support of the constitutional rights of its students, including due process, it also has an equal obligation to protect its education purpose and the interest of the student body. The University must therefore be concerned with the actions of individuals or groups that are in conflict with the welfare and integrity of the institution or in disregard of the rights of other students or faculty.

Attendance at a tax-supported institution of higher learning is optional and voluntary. By such voluntary entrance into the academic community of the University, students voluntarily assume the obligations of performance and behavior imposed by the University relevant to its lawful missions, processes, and functions.

When a student enters The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley it is assumed that he or she has a serious purpose and a sincere interest in personal, social and intellectual development. They are expected to learn to cope with problems with intelligence, reasonableness, and consideration for the rights of others; to obey laws and ordinances of the nation, state, and community for which they, as well as the University are a part. As students' prize rights and freedoms for themselves, they are expected to respect the rights and freedoms of others.

The administration of student discipline at The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley is a responsibility shared by students, faculty and administrative staff. In many cases, peer group influence, counseling, admonition, and example may resolve problems of student conduct. Where these preferred means fail, resort is made to disciplinary procedures. Any academic or administrative official, faculty member, or student may file a complaint against any student for misconduct. A student may be penalized herein, even though he is also punished by state or federal authorities for the same act.

Students are subject to federal, state, and local laws as well as University rules and regulations. Students are subject to reasonable disciplinary action, including suspension and expulsion in appropriate cases, for breach of federal, state, or local laws or University rules and regulations.

Individuals who are not currently enrolled at the University remain subject to the disciplinary process for conduct that occurred during any period of enrollment, and for statements, acts, or omissions related to application for enrollment or the award of a degree.

2. University Student Conduct and Discipline

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide students fair notice of conduct considered unacceptable at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) and which may be the basis for disciplinary action. This conduct listed is not intended to be a complete list of conduct punishable by disciplinary action.

This policy provides procedures to be followed when student disciplinary action may need to be and outlines the appeals process.

Persons Affected

All students at UTRGV.

Definitions

All references to the dean below could be replaced by a designee that the dean designates to handle the responsibility of certain situations.

1. Administrative Disposition-a document signed by the student and dean that includes a statement of the disciplinary charges, the findings, the sanction and a waiver of the hearing procedures and possibly a waiver of appeals under Regents' Rules and Regulations, Rule 50101, Part 2, and any institutional rules regarding student discipline.
2. Business Day-Monday through Friday, excluding any day that is an official holiday recognized by the institution or when regularly scheduled classes are suspended due to emergent situations.
3. Campus-Consists of all real property, buildings, or facilities owned or controlled by UTRGV or The University of Texas System.
4. Cheating-examples of cheating include but are not limited to:
 - a. Copying from the test paper of another student, engaging in written, oral, or any other means of communication with another student during a test, or giving aid to or seeking aid from another student during a test;
 - b. Possession or use during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes, books, or specifically designed

- "crib notes;"
- c. Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution or computer program;
 - d. Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student, person or resource for an assignment without authority;
 - e. Taking an examination for another person, or permitting another person to take an examination for one's self; and
 - f. Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, or other academic work offered for credit.
5. Collusion-the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.
 6. Day-a calendar day, except for any day that is an official holiday of the institution or when regularly scheduled classes are suspended due to emergent situations.
 7. Dean or Dean of Students-refers to the administrative officer or officers responsible for the administration of the disciplinary process at each institution. The Dean of Students may designate individual(s) to administer disciplinary cases under this policy.
 8. Harassment-intentionally creating a situation to persistently annoy or produce unnecessary and undue mental or emotional discomfort, embarrassment, ridicule, or interference with scholarship or personal lives.
 9. Hazing-any intentional, knowing or reckless act by one person alone or acting With others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include students at an educational institution.
 10. Hearing Officer-An individual or individuals selected in accordance with procedures adopted by the institution pursuant to the recommendation of the Dean of Students to hear disciplinary charges, make findings of fact, and upon a finding of responsibility, impose an appropriate sanction(s).
 11. Plagiarism-the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the unacknowledged submission (resubmission) or incorporation of it in one's own academic work offered for credit.
 12. Stalking-a pattern of repeated and unwanted attention, harassment, contact, or any other course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.
 13. Student-The following persons shall be considered students for purposes of These policies and regulations:
 - a. A person currently enrolled at UTRGV.
 - b. A person accepted for admission or readmission to the University or an institution in the UT System.
 - c. A person who has been enrolled at the University or an institution of the UT System in a prior semester or summer session and is eligible to continue

- enrollment in the semester or summer session that immediately follows.
- d. A person who engaged in prohibited conduct at a time when he or she met the criteria of a, b, or c above.

Policy

I. Authority

The Dean of Students shall have primary authority and responsibility for the administration of student discipline at UTRGV.

II. Violations/Prohibited Acts

All students are expected and required to obey federal, state, and local laws, to comply with the Regents' Rules and Regulations, with the UT System and institutional rules and regulations, with directives issued by an administrative official of the UT System or UTRGV in the course of his or her authorized duties, and to observe standards of conduct appropriate for an academic institution.

Any student who engages in conduct that violates the Regents' Rules, the UT System or UTRGV rules and regulations, specific instructions issued by an administrative official of UTRGV or the UT System acting in the course of his or her authorized duties, or federal, State, or local laws is subject to discipline. A student is subject to discipline for prohibited conduct that occurs on or off campus, including but not limited to UTRGV or UT System sponsored off-campus activities such as field trips, internships, rotations or clinical assignments, regardless of whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

a. Scholastic Dishonesty

Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student, or any attempt to commit such acts. (See Academic Integrity Violation Sanctioning Guidelines).

b. Drugs

Any student who uses, possesses or sells drugs or narcotics on campus or at a campus related event is subject to discipline. If a student is found responsible for the illegal use, possession, or sale of a drug or narcotic on campus, the minimum sanction assessed shall be suspension from UTRGV for a specified period of time or suspension of rights and privileges.

c. Alcohol

The unauthorized use or possession of any intoxicating beverage in a UTRGV facility or campus grounds or while participating in a UTRGV sponsored trip including, but not limited to minor in possession, public intoxication, allowing minors access, or any violation of UTRGV policies

- concerning alcohol and other drugs.
- d. Health or Safety
Any student who while on campus or at a campus-related event, intentionally or recklessly engages in conduct that endangers the health or safety of any person may be subject to discipline.
 - e. Disruptive Conduct
Any student who, acting singly or in concert with others, obstructs, disrupts, or interferes with any teaching, educational, research, administrative, disciplinary, public service, or other activity or public performance authorized to be held or conducted on campus or on property or in a building or facility owned or controlled by the UT System or UTRGV is subject to discipline. Obstruction or disruption includes but is not limited to any act that interrupts, modifies, or damages utility service or equipment, communication service or equipment, university computers, computer programs, computer records or computer networks accessible through the university's computer resources. A separate UTRGV HOP policy on free speech, expression and assembly provides guidelines for the campus community to express their ideas, opinions and beliefs.
 - f. Inciting Lawless Action
Any student who, while on any UTRGV campus or at a UTRGV-related event, engages in conduct directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action and may be likely to incite or produce such action is subject to discipline.
 - g. Unauthorized Use of Property
Any student who engages in the unauthorized use of property, equipment, supplies, buildings, or facilities owned or controlled by the UT System or UTRGV is subject to discipline.
 - h. Hazing
Any student who, acting singly or in concert with others, engages in hazing may be subject to discipline. Hazing in State educational institutions is prohibited by State law (Texas Education Code Section 51.936 and Sections 37.151-37.157). Hazing with or without the consent of a student whether on or off campus is prohibited. A violation of that prohibition may render both the person(s) inflicting the hazing and the person voluntarily submitting to the hazing subject to discipline. Knowingly failing to report hazing may also subject one to discipline. Initiations or activities of organizations may include no feature that is dangerous, harmful, or degrading to the student, and a violation of this prohibition renders both the organization and participating individuals subject to discipline.
 - i. Harassment
Any student who, acting singly or in concert with others, engages in conduct that includes any action meant to harass, intimidate, bully or stalk another students may be subject to discipline. Some examples include:
 - 1. Intentionally creating a situation to persistently annoy or produce unnecessary and undue mental or emotional discomfort, embarrassment, ridicule, or interference with scholarship or personal lives.

2. Intimidation of others such as to unlawfully place another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words and/or other conduct, without displaying a weapon or subjecting the victim to actual physical attack.
 3. Engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that involves repeated (two or more) visual or physical proximity, nonconsensual communication, or verbal, written, or implied threats, or a combination thereof, that would cause a reasonable person to (a) fear for their safety or the safety of others; or (b) suffer substantial emotional distress.
- j. Sexual Harassment and Misconduct
UTRGV is committed to the principle that its working and learning environment be free from inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment or sexual misconduct in any form will not be tolerated and individuals who engage in such conduct are subject to disciplinary action. UTRGV's policy and procedures regarding sexual harassment and misconduct are delineated in the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy (ADM 03-300).
- k. Altering of Official Documents
Students who commit one of the following scenarios is subject to disciplinary action:
- A student who alters or assists in the altering of any official record of the UT System;
 - A student who submits false information or omits requested information that is required for or related to an application for admission, the award of a degree, or any official record of the UT System or UTRGV may be subject to discipline.
 - A former student who engages in such conduct may be subject to a bar against readmission, revocation of degree, and withdrawal of diploma.
- l. Non Compliance with University Officials
Any student who fails to comply with any reasonable order or instruction of an official of UTRGV or UT System acting in the course of their duties, including failing to identify him or herself and provide identification documentation to a University official when requested to do so, or providing false identification is subject to discipline.
- m. Vandalism
Any student who defaces, mutilates, destroys, or takes unauthorized possession of any property, equipment, supplies, buildings, or facilities owned or controlled by UTRGV or the UT System is subject to discipline.
- n. Use of Explosives, Weapons or Hazardous Chemicals
Unless authorized by federal, State, or local laws, or related to academic instruction or activity, a student who possesses or uses any type of explosive, firearm, imitation firearm, ammunition, hazardous chemical, or weapon as defined by State or federal law, while on campus or on any property or in any building or facility owned or controlled by the UT System or UTRGV, is subject to discipline.

o. Federal, State and Local Laws

Any conduct that constitutes a violation of a federal, state, or local law or regulation regardless of whether the conduct results in the imposition of a penalty prescribed by the federal, state, or local law.

p. Prohibited Conduct During Suspension or Probation

A student who receives a period of suspension or probation as a disciplinary sanction is subject to further disciplinary action for engaging in prohibited conduct during the period of suspension or probation.

III. Investigation

It shall be the duty of the dean or designee to investigate allegations that a student has engaged in conduct that violates Regent's Rules, UTRGV rules or policies, or any provisions of federal, state, or local laws in the course of the dean's or designee's authorized duties. After completing a preliminary investigation, if the dean or designee determines that such allegations are supported by the evidence, he or she may proceed with the disciplinary process, notwithstanding any action taken by other authorities. Before proceeding with disciplinary action, the dean will offer the student the opportunity to meet to provide a response to the charges and, upon request, to review the available evidence supporting the charges.

If there is a more specific policy that specifies the procedures for investigation, such as the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct policy, that policy will govern; however, all the powers provided herein to the dean for investigations involving student witnesses, including summons, interim disciplinary action, and withholding transcripts, grades and degrees are delegated to the investigator designated in that policy.

IV. Summons

A student may be summoned by written request of the dean or designee for a meeting to discuss the allegations. The written request may specify a place for the meeting and a time at least three weekdays after the date of the written request. The written request may also direct the student to contact a specific person or office to set an appointment within a specified period of time. The written request may be mailed to the address appearing in the records of the registrar, emailed to the student's UTRGV issued email address, or may be hand delivered to the student. If a student fails to appear or respond without good cause as determined by the dean or designee, the dean or designee may bar or cancel the student's enrollment or otherwise alter the status of the student until the student complies with the summons, or the dean may proceed to implement the disciplinary process. The refusal of a student to accept delivery of the notice or the failure to maintain a current address with the registrar shall not be good cause for the failure to respond to a summons.

V. Interim Disciplinary Action

Pending a hearing to other disposition of the allegations against a student, the dean may take such immediate interim disciplinary action as appropriate to the

circumstances, including:

- (a) suspension and bar from the campus when it reasonably appears to the dean that the continuing presence of the student poses a potential danger to persons or property or a potential threat for disrupting any activity authorized by UTRGV;
- or (b) the withholding of grades, degree, or official transcript when such action is in the best interest of the University.

When interim disciplinary action has been taken, a hearing of the charges against the student will be held under the procedures specified in this section within ten days after the interim disciplinary action was taken unless the student agrees in writing to a hearing at a later time or unless the student waives a hearing and accepts the decision of the dean in accordance with Subsection: Administrative Disposition of Charges.

When the dean determines that the administrative process of hearing process and any ensuing appeal will not be completed before the end of a semester or summer session, appropriate action may be taken to withhold the student's grades or degree pending final disposition of the disciplinary action.

VI. Administrative Disposition of Charges

- a. In any case, except in a case finding a violation of the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy, where the accused student does not dispute the facts upon which the charges are based and agrees to the sanctions the Dean assess, the student may execute a written waiver of the hearing procedures specified in Subsection: Hearing Process, the dean shall assess one or more of the penalties specified in Subsection: Disciplinary Procedures that is appropriate to the charges and inform the student of such action in writing. This administrative disposition shall be final and there shall be no subsequent proceedings regarding the charges. In any case finding a violation of the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy, the case will proceed under this Policy unless both the accused and the accuser agree to the terms of the administrative disposition and thus waive the hearing and appeals.
- b. In any case where the accused student elects not to dispute the facts upon which the charges are based, but does not agree with the sanctions assessed by the Dean, the student may execute a written waiver of the hearing procedures yet retain the right to appeal the decision only on the issue of penalty. The appeal must be in writing and submitted to the President's Office within ten (10) business days of the Dean's decision as specified in the appeal procedures in Section IX: Appeal Procedures.
- c. In cases where a student is found in violation of the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy, the case will proceed before a Hearing Officer unless both the accused and the accuser agree to the waiver of the hearing procedures. In any case involving a violation of the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy, the accuser will be provided an equal opportunity to participate in the process.
- d. The minimum penalty that may be assessed when a student admits illegal use, possession, or sale of a drug or narcotic on campus shall be suspension from the

institution for a specified period of time or suspension of rights and privileges.

e. Faculty Disposition of Academic Dishonesty Cases

UTRGV permits faculty members to choose one of two options when resolving suspected issues of academic dishonesty:

1. Direct referral for the alleged infraction to Student Rights and Responsibilities for resolution, or
2. Completion of faculty disposition. This can occur in any case where the student does not dispute the facts and both the faculty member and student sign a form that includes a sanction and a written waiver of the hearing and appeal procedures. Both a direct referral and a faculty disposition are reported using a single form (the Faculty Referral/Faculty Disposition Form): this form should be used for all suspected academic integrity violations at UTRGV.
3. Reference to Sanctioning Guidelines. In assessing sanctions for academic dishonesty, the Dean of Students shall give preference to the recommended sanction of the faculty member involved, provided the recommended penalty is within the Academic Integrity Violation Sanctioning Guidelines.

VII. Hearing Process

1. In those cases in which the accused student disputes the facts upon which the charges are based, such charges shall be heard and determined by a fair and impartial Hearing Officer. In sexual harassment/sexual misconduct cases, the alleged victim may pursue an appeal under the same procedure as the accused student. An appeal shall be in accordance with the following procedures. In any case involving a violation of the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy, the accuser will be provided the same rights and responsibilities outlined in this section as the accused including the right to have notice of the hearing.
2. Except in those cases where immediate interim disciplinary action has been taken, the accused student shall be given at least ten days written notice of the date, time, and place of such hearing and the name of the Hearing Officer. The notice shall include a statement of the charge(s). The notice shall be delivered in person to the student, emailed to the student's UTRGV issued e-mail or mailed to the student at the address appearing in the registrar's records. A notice sent by mail will be considered to have been received on the third day after the date of the mailing, excluding any intervening Sunday. The date for the hearing may be postponed by the Hearing Officer for good cause or by agreement of the student and dean. A request for postponement must be in writing, must state the reason for the postponement, and must be delivered to the Hearing Officer through the Office of the Dean at least three days prior to the date for the hearing. If the student fails to appear for the hearing, the hearing may be held in his or her absence.
3. The accused student may challenge the impartiality of the Hearing Officer. The challenge must be in writing, state the reasons for the challenge, and be submitted to the Hearing Officer through the Office of the Dean at least three

days prior to the hearing. The Hearing Officer shall be the sole judge of whether he or she can serve with fairness and objectivity. In the event the Hearing Officer disqualifies himself or herself, a substitute will be appointed by the Dean of Students.

4. Upon a hearing of the charges, the dean has the burden of going forward with the evidence and has the burden of proving the charges by the greater weight of the credible evidence.
5. To avoid issues concerning invasion of the accused student's right of privacy and the unauthorized disclosure of information records protected by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the hearing should be closed to everyone except the dean, the accused student, the advisor of the accused student, the Hearing Officer, witnesses providing testimony, and the person making the record of the hearing. Because witnesses should testify from personal knowledge and without regard to what other witnesses may say, no potential witnesses other than the dean and the accused student may be present in the hearing room until called to give testimony.
6. The Hearing Officer is responsible for conducting the hearing in an orderly manner and controlling the conduct of the witnesses and participants in the hearing. The Hearing Officer shall rule on all procedural matters and on objections regarding exhibits and testimony of witnesses, may question witnesses, and is entitled to have the advice and assistance of legal counsel from the Office of General Counsel of the UT System. The Hearing Officer shall render and send to the dean and the accused student a written decision that contains findings of fact and a conclusion as to the guilt or innocence of the accused student. Upon a conclusion of guilt, the Hearing Officer shall assess a penalty or penalties specified in this policy. Guilt of the illegal use, possession, or sale of a drug or narcotic on campus shall be suspension from the institution for a specified period of time or suspension of rights and privileges.
7. The dean and the accused student shall be assured the following rights:
 - a. Each party shall provide the other party a list of witnesses, a brief summary of the testimony to be given by each, and a copy of documents to be introduced at the hearing at least five days prior to the hearing.
 - b. Each party shall have the right to appear, present testimony of witnesses a documentary evidence, cross-examine witnesses and be assisted by an advisor of choice. The advisory may be an attorney. If the accused student's advisor is an attorney, the advisor of the dean may be an attorney from the Office of General Counsel of the UT System. An advisor may confer with and advise the dean or accused student but shall not be permitted to question witnesses, introduce evidence, make objections, give testimony to a witness, or present argument to a Hearing Officer. In sexual harassment/sexual assault cases, the alleged victim shall have the right to be present throughout the hearing, to have an advisor present during the hearing, to have irrelevant past sexual history with third parties excluded from the evidence; and to have a closed hearing, in addition to such other

- rights and protections as may be required by law or by UTRGV or UT System policy or procedures.
- c. The dean may recommend a penalty to be assessed by the Hearing Officer. The recommendations may be based upon past practice of the institutions or violations of a similar nature, the past disciplinary record of the student, or other factors deemed relevant by the dean. The accused student shall be entitled to respond to the recommendations of the dean.
 - d. The hearing will be recorded. If either party desires to appeal the decision of the Hearing Officer, the official record will consist of the recording of the hearing, the documents received in evidence, and the decision of the Hearing Officer. If, at the request of the President, the University transcribes the recording of the hearing, the accused student and the dean will be furnished a copy of transcript.
8. The hearing shall proceed generally as follows:
- a. The dean reads the statement of charges and introduces the notice letter as evidence;
 - b. The dean presents evidence in support of the charges;
 - c. The accused student presents his or her defense;
 - d. The dean and the accused student present rebuttal evidence;
 - e. The dean makes a closing argument summarizing the evidence and recommending a penalty to be imposed in the event the Hearing Officer finds the accused student guilty of the charges;
 - f. The accused student makes a closing argument summarizing the evidence and responding to the recommendations regarding penalty;
 - g. The dean makes a final argument;
 - h. The Hearing Officer adjourns the hearing, deliberates, makes findings of fact, and decides the issue of guilt or innocence and assesses an appropriate penalty or penalties in the event of a finding of guilt;
 - i. The Hearing Officer informs the dean and the accused student in writing of the decision and the penalty, if any.

VIII. Disciplinary Penalties

One or more of the following penalties, as appropriate for the circumstances, may be assessed by the dean or by the Hearing Officer after a hearing in accordance with the procedures in this policy.

1. Oral or written reprimand may be issued in cases on minor infractions. This penalty may be assessed only by the dean.
2. Disciplinary probation. A specified period of time during which the student is required to comply with specified terms and conditions that include not engaging in further conduct that violates the Regents' Rules and Regulations or UTRGV rules and regulations. The penalty or penalties that will be imposed for failure to comply with the terms and conditions will depend upon the nature of the conduct for which the probation may be imposed. Disciplinary probation may be imposed in conjunction with other penalties for scholastic dishonesty but may not be the sole penalty of scholastic

- dishonesty.
3. Withholding of grades, official transcript, or degree. The Dean may also withhold the issuance of an official transcript, grade, diploma, certificate, or degree to a student alleged to have violated a rule or regulation of the UT System or the institutions that would reasonably allow the imposition of such sanction. The Dean may take such action pending a hearing, resolution by administrative disposition, or exhaustion of appellate rights if the Dean has provided the student an opportunity to provide a preliminary response to the allegations and in the opinion of the Dean, the best interests of the UT System or the institution would be served by this action.
 4. Bar against readmission. The bar will be imposed for a specified period of time or until certain conditions are met and will be removed at the expiration of that period or when such conditions are met.
 5. Restitution or reimbursement for damage or to misappropriation of UTRGV or UT System property. A student is required to reimburse the University for actual loss that results from damage to or unauthorized taking or use of property owned or leased by UTRGV or UT System when the conduct of the student has caused or contributed to cause such loss. The notice imposing the penalty will advise the student of the amount of the loss and that failure to make restitution by a specified date will result in suspension from UTRGV until such time as restitution shall have been made. Restitution may also apply to the property of others.
 6. Suspension of rights and privileges. This means that a student shall not be eligible to participate in official UTRGV events or activities, including athletic events, shall not join a registered student organization or participate in any meeting or activities or a registered student organization of which he or she may already be a member, and shall not be appointed or elected to or continue to function in any office or position within student government or official student publications. Students also may be barred from entering specified buildings or restricted from using particular facilities. This penalty may be imposed in part or in full as appropriate to the circumstances.
 7. Failing grade for an examination or assignment or for a course, or cancellation of all or any portion of prior course credit. All or any portion of these penalties may be imposed when a student is found guilty of scholastic dishonesty.
 8. Denial of degree. A student found guilty of scholastic dishonesty may be denied a degree.
 9. Suspension from the University for a specified period of time. During the period of suspension, the former student is prohibited from entering any UTRGV campus or the campus of any UT System component institution without prior written approval from the dean of students of the component institution at which the student wishes to be present; from being initiated into an honorary or service organization; and from receiving credit at UTRGV for scholastic work done at another institution during the period of the suspension. Any special conditions outlined in this suspension notice must be met before readmission can be granted. Suspension is noted on the academic transcript

with the term “Disciplinary Suspension.” The notation can be removed upon the request of the student in accordance with the procedures adopted in the institution’s code of conduct when all conditions of the suspension are met.

10. Expulsion. Expulsion (permanent separation from the institution) requires the permanent imposition of the same prohibitions as for suspension. The penalty may also include denial of a degree when appropriate. Moreover, expulsion creates a permanent notation on the student’s academic transcript.
11. Revocation of degree and withdrawal of diploma. This action may be imposed when a former student engaged in scholastic dishonesty with regard to any of the academic work required for the degree of that individual or the degree or another individual.
12. Other penalty as deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

IX. Appeal Procedures

A student may appeal a disciplinary penalty assessed by the dean. Either the dean or the student may appeal the decision of the Hearing Officer after a hearing. An appeal shall be in accordance with the following procedures:

1. Written notice of appeal must be delivered to the President , or their designee, of UTRGV within ten (10) business days after the appealing party has been notified of the penalty assessed by the dean or the decision of the Hearing Officer. If the notice of penalty assessed by the dean or the decision of the Hearing Officer is sent by mail, the date the notice or decision is mailed initiates the fourteen day period for giving notice of appeal to the President. An appeal of the penalty assessed pursuant to this policy will be reviewed solely on the basis of the written argument of the student and the dean. The appeal of the decision of the Hearing Officer will be reviewed solely on the basis of the record from the hearing. The record from the hearing shall consist of the recording of the hearing, the documents admitted in evidence, and the written decision of the Hearing Officer. The dean shall be responsible for filing the record from the hearing with the President. In order for the appeal to be considered, all the necessary documentation to be filed by the appealing party, including written argument, must be filed with the President within fourteen days after notice of appeal is given. Both parties may, at the discretion of the President, present oral argument in an appeal of the decision of the Hearing Officer. The President may request that the recording of the hearing be transcribed. A copy of the transcription shall be provided to the dean and the student.
2. The President may approve, reject, or modify the decision in question or may require that the hearing be reopened for the presentation of additional evidence and reconsideration of the decision. If the President upholds the finding of guilt in a case involving the illegal use, possession, or sale of a drug or narcotic on campus, the penalty may not be reduced below the minimum penalty prescribed in Section II. Violations (b. Drugs).
3. The President shall communicate his or her decision to the accused student and the dean in writing within thirty days after the appeal and related documents

- have been received. The decision of the President is the final appellate review.
4. Notice of appeal timely given by a student appellant suspends the imposition of Penalty until the appeal is finally decided, but interim action appropriate to the circumstances may be taken pending final disposition of the appeal. Such action may include bar from University buildings, facilities, and property, the withholding of grades, degrees, or official transcripts.

X. Disciplinary Records

1. The academic transcript of a student suspended or expelled for disciplinary reasons shall be marked with “Disciplinary Suspension” or “Expulsion” as appropriate. Each institution shall maintain a permanent written disciplinary record for every student assessed a sanction of suspension, expulsion, denial or revocation of degree, or withdrawal of diploma.
2. The hearing record, notice of appeal, and all documentation, including written arguments, that contain information that makes the student identifiable shall not be subject to disclosure except upon request of the student or in accordance with applicable state or federal laws or court order or subpoena.
3. UTRGV shall maintain a permanent written disciplinary record for every student assessed a penalty of suspension, expulsion, denial, or revocation of degree or withdrawal of diploma. A record of scholastic dishonesty shall be maintained for at least five years, and disciplinary records required by law to be maintained for a certain period of time (i.e. Clery violations) shall be maintained for at least the time specified in the applicable law, unless the record is permanent in conjunction with the above stated penalties. The disciplinary record of other penalties shall be maintained for such as period of time as determined by the dean. A disciplinary record shall reflect the name of the student involved, the nature of the charge, the disposition of the charge, the penalty assessed, and such other information as may be deemed pertinent. This disciplinary record shall be maintained separately from the student’s academic record, shall be treated as confidential, and shall not be accessible to or used by anyone other than the dean, except upon written authorization of the student or in accordance with applicable state or federal laws or court order or subpoena.

XI. Notification of the Registrar

1. The Dean of Students shall notify the registrar when one of the following penalties is assessed in a disciplinary case:
 - a. Withholding of grades, official transcripts, or degree
 - b. Bar against readmission;
 - c. Drop from enrollment;
 - d. Failing grade;
 - e. Denial of degree;
 - f. Suspension from UTRGV and transcript noted accordingly;
 - g. Expulsion from UTRGV and transcript noted accordingly;
 - h. Revocation of degree and withdrawal of diploma

2. The registrar shall make such entries upon or corrections to the academic record as required to comply with the assessed penalty but shall make no permanent notation upon the academic record to indicate that any disciplinary action has been taken.
3. Relevant Federal and/or State Statute(s), Board of Regents' Rule(s), UTS Policy(ies), and/or Coordinating Board Rule(s)

University of Texas System Board of Regents' Rules and Regulations Rule 50101, Student Conduct and Discipline

Student Conduct and Discipline OGC Model Policy

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy

Consensual Relationship Policy

HOP Section: STU02-100

3. Academic Appeals

Academic Appeals

Students wishing to appeal final grades or decisions regarding academic standards should first discuss the matter with the instructor of the class. If no resolution occurs, and the student wishes to pursue the matter further, the student may appeal in writing to the appropriate department chair within one long semester after the disputed grade or decision is issued. The department chair will respond in writing to the student within 14 calendar days (excluding holidays) of the receipt of the student's written appeal.

Pursuant appeals will be written and directed within 14 calendar days (excluding holidays) of the date of the department chair's decision to the school, college, or division College Academic Appeals Committee. The committee will consist of a panel of three faculty members, two of whom may not be from the department in which the appeal originated. The dean or director will appoint the panel members upon receipt of the written appeal and notify the student in writing of the date, time and location of the hearing and the names of the members of the panel.

The student and the faculty member involved may appear in person before the panel and present evidence. The hearing will be closed to the public, and no person other than the student, the faculty member involved and panel members may be present. No person may represent the student or the faculty member.

After the College Academic Appeals Committee has heard the appeal, it will deliberate and come to a decision. The committee's decision will be written and mailed, or delivered in person, to the student and faculty member within three class

days of the close of the hearing. The student may appeal in writing within 14 calendar days to the dean/director (excluding holidays). The dean's/director's decision will be final, and it must be mailed or delivered in person to the student within 14 calendar days (excluding holidays) of the receipt of the student's written appeal.

This policy is included as of the UTRGV Undergraduate catalog.

4. **STUDENT GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS**

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide students with procedures for resolving complaints against The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) faculty and staff related to matters other than discrimination or grade appeals.

B. Persons Affected

This policy applies to students of UTRGV.

C. Definitions

Not applicable.

D. Policy

The policy of UTRGV is to provide students with a procedure for resolving complaints against UTRGV faculty and staff related to matters other than discrimination or grade appeals within the following scope:

This procedure does not apply to complaints based on allegations or discrimination, matters concerning grade appeals, or matters that are reviewable pursuant to other procedures provided by The University of Texas System Board of Regents Rules and Regulations, the UTRGV Handbook of Operating Procedures, Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs, or other approved policies or procedures of the UT System. Students with questions concerning grade appeals or discrimination must contact the appropriate academic personnel or compliance officer and refer to appropriate policies in the Handbook of Operating Procedures.

E. Responsibilities

Not applicable.

F. Procedures

Students can submit a formal complaint to Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR) through the Vaquero Care Report It Form, which is available online at www.utrgv.edu/reportit.

Students are encouraged to consult with SRR staff to discuss the options available to the student in filing a complaint.

A student may choose to proceed using either the informal resolution process or the formal process to resolve their complaint. Handbook of Operating Procedures Section: STU 02-200.

1. Informal Resolution:

In an effort to resolve misunderstandings or concerns through an informal resolution, a student is encouraged to first make a reasonable effort to resolve the problem by discussing his or her concerns with the faculty or staff member against whom the complaint is lodged. Unless extraordinary circumstances exist, the faculty or staff member shall respond to the student initiating the complaint no later than 10 business days after receipt of the complaint.

If the student does not agree with the informal resolution reached with the faculty or staff member, the student may file a formal complaint no later than 10 business days after receiving the faculty or staff member's response at SRR or by completing the Vaquero Care Report It form online (www.utrgv.edu/reportit).

2. Formal Resolution:

Formal complaints are submitted to SRR utilizing the Vaquero Care Report It form. SRR must notify the student no later than five business days after it receives the complaint that the complaint has been forwarded to the appropriate department chair and director for review and to provide a formal response.

In addressing the student's formal complaint, the department chair or head must solicit information from both the student and employee. The Chair may confer with anyone having information pertinent to the complaint, or may hold a meeting between the student and the employee to resolve the complaint.

The chair or department head shall provide a response to the student initiating the complaint within 10 business days after receiving the complaint.

If the complaint is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student may appeal in writing to the next administrative level. The appeal must be filed no later than 10 business days after receipt of the chair or department head's decision. A decision at the administrative level must be emailed, mailed, or delivered in person to the student no later than 10 business days after receipt of the student's written appeal.

Additional appeals may be pursued through the appropriate lines of authority up to the vice presidential level.

The 10 business days applies to each appeal and to each notification of decision as described above. Decisions at the vice presidential level will be final

Medical Laboratory Science Program Policies

1. Criminal Background Check

Students will be required to have a criminal background check prior to beginning enrollment in the program. Directions for completing the CBC on line are mailed to students upon notification of admission.

2. Physical Exam

Students will be required to have a complete physical examination prior to beginning enrollment in the program. This may be done by the student's own physician or the student health service. The completed physical form must be submitted to the Program Director no later than September 1 of each year. Prior to performing procedures which require patient contact, students must show proof of required immunizations. Students who were born on or after January 1, 1957, must show proof of two doses of measles vaccine, one dose of mumps vaccine or proof of immunity to these diseases, one dose of tetanus/diphtheria vaccine (within 10 years), and one dose of rubella vaccine administered on or after the first birthday or serologic proof of rubella immunity. Students must also have an IPPD or other appropriate TB test within the last year. In addition, students must receive a complete series of hepatitis B vaccine or show proof of serologic immunity. The hepatitis B vaccine consists of a series of 3 doses and the first dose must be completed by the end of the first week of classes. The complete series must be completed prior to patient contact. Students must also receive two doses of varicella vaccine unless the first dose was received prior to thirteen years of age. A titer of varicella immunity and other immunizations is acceptable in lieu of vaccine.

3. Liability/Health Insurance

Students are required to maintain coverage with health and professional liability insurance during the time in which they are enrolled in the program. A blanket policy for professional liability is furnished through the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley. Payment for this policy is covered by the field placement fee.

4. Service Work by Students

Students are not required to perform service work at any clinical affiliate after they have attained entry-level competency nor will they be used as a substitute for regular laboratory staff. Students may perform service work outside of regular academic hours as a regular employee of the hospital if the opportunity arises and the student so desires. It must be purely voluntary, supervised and subject to the usual employee regulations. Employment of students by the clinical affiliates is solely between the affiliate and the student. The University or its employees bear no responsibility for this work.

5. Attendance

Promptness and dependability are professional traits that the student is expected to develop. Students are expected to attend class, clinical, and laboratory sessions unless prevented from doing so by serious extenuating circumstances. Students are expected to arrive on time and be present for all class sessions. Attendance is evaluated as part of the student's affective behavior. Students who have more than three unexcused absences in a semester may be dropped from the class by the instructor.

Students should inform the instructor or clinical supervisor if they find it necessary to miss a class or anticipate being late for unavoidable reasons. If illness or emergency precludes notice in advance, then notice at the earliest possible time is still required. If an absence requires several days, the student should contact the program director to explain the situation and the anticipated date of return to program activities. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements for the completion of any work which they have missed. In some cases it is impossible to make-up laboratory sessions due to the labile nature of some specimens. Therefore, students are strongly encouraged to avoid any unnecessary absences. All clinical hours must be made up due to the critical nature of these experiences.

6. Confidentiality

Students are expected to maintain confidentiality of patient information. Each student will be expected to sign a confidentiality form prior to their initial clinical experience. It is imperative that information regarding patients remain confidential and that patient rights be protected.

7. Grading

Each instructor will supply students with a course syllabus which explains the individual course requirements. The following grading scale will be used for clinical laboratory science courses:

A	90-100
B	80-89.9
C	70-79.9
D	65-69.9
F	Below 65

Grades are not rounded to the nearest whole number. For example, a score of 69.9 would be recorded as a D, a 79.9 would be a C and an 89.9 would be a B. Students must pass the lecture and laboratory or clinical portions of all medical laboratory science courses with a C or better in order to satisfactorily complete the course. Should a student not receive a passing average in any section, the lower of the two grades will be used to assign the final grade.

8. Program Standing

Students are required to maintain a grade of C or better in all medical laboratory science courses. If a student earns a grade lower than a C, he/she must repeat the course at the next regularly scheduled time that it is offered. Students who earn a grade less than a C in any prerequisite course will not be allowed to take any advanced courses which require that course as a prerequisite. All on campus courses must be completed with a C or better prior to beginning the clinical rotations. If a student fails to earn a C or better in any course, or earns a grade lower than a C in any required course two times, she/he will be not be permitted to continue in the Program.

Due to the intensive nature of the clinical practicums, some students may not be able to attain the necessary levels of competency within the allotted time frame. Therefore, these courses are handled differently than the on-campus courses. Students who fail to attain satisfactory levels of performance in the cognitive, psychomotor or affective area of one clinical course will be placed on probationary status in the program. The student will then be given an opportunity to bring his/her performance up to an acceptable level. The student will meet with the instructor and a course of remediation will be agreed upon along with an appropriate date of completion. The highest overall grade that a student can make after remediation is a C in that practicum. Students who are unable to bring their performance up to acceptable levels by the designated date will receive the grade which they have earned in the course and will not be permitted to continue in the program. Students who receive a D or below in a second clinical course demonstrate unacceptable generalized deficiencies and will not be permitted to continue in the program

9. Readmission

Students who are dropped from the medical laboratory science program for academic reasons are not automatically readmitted. Students must make a formal written request for readmission. Readmission depends on space availability and the student's previous performance in CLSC courses. Students will be notified of their readmission by August 1. The admission committee may require repetition of foundation medical laboratory science courses or other remedial work in addition to the repetition of courses which the student previously failed. Students who receive a grade of D or less (grade less than 70) and/or drop the same CLSC course twice to avoid a failing grade are ineligible for readmission into the MLS Program.

10. Clinical Practicum Assignments/Placements

The program strives to ensure that appropriate clinical sites are available to accommodate all students admitted into the program. The program reviews the number of anticipated clinical sites each year prior to accepting students for admission. However, the Program also recognizes that unforeseen changes in a facility's status may occur because of staffing, workload constraints or other major limiting factors. Should such changes occur which are outside of the control of the University and this results in insufficient sites

available to students, the Program Director will first try to locate additional clinical slots at another appropriate facility. If no additional slots are identified, clinical placement will be based on the following criteria:

1. Students must be in good standing, with at least a C in all CLSC courses.
2. Assignments will be made in the order of class standing, based on grades for CLSC courses. Full time students progressing in the normal sequence will be given priority.
3. Students who are not placed at a clinical site will go on a waiting list in order of class standing based on grades in CLSC courses. These students will be placed in the next available clinical slot.

Students will be assigned to one or more clinical affiliates in order to fulfill clinical practicum requirements. After successful completion of the on-campus courses, students will be assigned to the practicum Tuesday through Friday for approximately 32 hours per week during the summer and fall semesters. Specific times will vary according to the normal hours of the clinical facility. Students will be evaluated on the psychomotor, cognitive and affective behaviors and must meet passing standards in all three areas. Students will normally meet on-campus once per week for exams during the summer and twice during the fall. During the clinical practicum portion, student schedules may not conform exactly to the University Schedule. Students are also advised that should they be injured or require medical attention while in the clinical facility, neither the facility or the University is responsible for any medical expenses incurred by the student. Therefore, students are required to maintain appropriate medical insurance coverage. During clinical assignment, students are allowed to perform laboratory procedures under supervision until competency is achieved.

11. Dress Code

During the on-campus portion, all students are expected to wear Caribbean Blue scrubs. Shorts are never appropriate as they create an unsafe situation in the laboratory. Disposable lab coats are to be worn in the student laboratory and are not to be removed from the laboratory area. Closed toe shoes are required in the student laboratory. This is necessary in order to conform to existing safety guidelines when using potentially biohazardous material. Students admitted to the program will be issued lab coats and face shields for use on campus.

Students in the practicum must adhere to the dress code of the laboratory where they are assigned. The student must present a professional appearance which is compatible with others in the laboratory. Protective clothing as described in laboratory safety policies must be worn when appropriate.

12. Testing

Major tests are timed and may be computer graded. Instructors have the right and responsibility to ensure security of testing and test materials. Tests are kept in the department and will remain on file for one year following the student's completion of the program. Students may request access to this file after presenting appropriate identification. Exams may not be copied or duplicated. Students who are unable to take a scheduled exam, must notify the instructor prior to the scheduled exam period or as soon as it is feasible. Arrangements for a make-up exam must be made the first day that the student returns to class. Make-up quizzes are not available for missed quizzes.

13. Transportation

Students are responsible for their own transportation to the University and to and from clinical facilities. In addition, the students assume all responsibility for safety in travel to the University and to and from clinical facilities and hold the University harmless in the event of an accident, injury, property damage, and/or death.

14. Safety

Any accident or injury while participating in scheduled lab, lecture or practicum activities should be immediately reported to the supervising instructor. It is the policy of the medical laboratory science department to make the laboratory environment as safe a place as possible for staff, faculty and students. Failure to follow any of the procedures described in the laboratory safety rules may endanger the health and safety of everyone involved. Therefore, violations of safety policy will not be tolerated. The laboratory instructor will monitor students to make sure that all safety practices are being followed. A copy of the safety rules for the Medical Laboratory Science Program is included in Appendix A. Students should sign and date the form indicating that they have read and understand this information. The following consequences will result from failure to abide by the above policies:

- a. Any breach of safety policy will immediately be brought to the attention of the student and he/she will be instructed as to the correct method. The student will be given a verbal warning and will be asked to review ALL of the safety rules.
- b. If a student fails a second time to abide by the policies set forth, he/she will be referred to the program director for counseling. The instructor will document the safety infraction in writing and a copy of this report will be placed in the student's permanent program file.
- c. If the student breaches any policy for a third time, the student will be asked to leave the laboratory and will receive a zero (0) for that laboratory period. No make-up sessions will be allowed for these missed lab sessions.
- d. Adherence to safety policies is evaluated as part of the student's overall grade in the

student laboratory. Safe clinical practice is essential to the health and well-being of the medical laboratory scientist.

15. Blood Borne Pathogens Exposure

If a student gets a blood borne exposure (needle stick, blood or body fluids splash, scalpel cut, broken glass, etc.) while in clinical rotation or in the laboratory, the following steps are to be taken:

- a. Student is to immediately wash the site for a minimum of 15 minutes. If to the eye or mucous membranes-flush with water or saline for minimum of 15 minutes. If wearing contacts-remove contact lenses and flush for 15 minutes.
- b. Notify his/her immediate clinical supervisor or faculty member of the incident.
- c. Student is to report to Student Health Services immediately.
- d. The Student Health Service staff will report all blood borne exposures to the UTRGV Department of Environmental Health and Safety 956-665-3690; Director Dr. Richard Costello.

16. Accident/Health Insurance

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) MLS Program requires students to purchase a Health Insurance Policy in case of medical emergencies. Accidents which occur on our campus or while a student is participating in a UTRGV sponsored off campus activity including clinical and practicum assignments are not covered by the University. Contact the Student Health Service at (956) 665-2511 for information on forms and procedures to follow if you have an accident while on campus or at a clinical facility. There are time limitations, so students should file any appropriate paperwork as soon as possible. Students should keep in mind they will be financially responsible for any medical expenses incurred from accidents while as a student on campus or at a clinical facility.

17. Scholastic Dishonesty

Students are expected to be above reproach in all scholastic activities. Students who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the University. "Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts." Regents' Rules and Regulations, Part One, Chapter VI, Section 3, Subsection 3.2, Subdivision 3.22.

SINCE SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY HARMS THE INDIVIDUAL, ALL STUDENTS AND THE INTEGRITY OF THE UNIVERSITY, POLICIES ON SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED.

NOTE: Students who receive an unacceptable letter grade in clinical practicum due to an act of scholastic dishonesty are not eligible for remediation.

18. Student Records

Access and disclosure of student records is governed by University Policy as stated in the Handbook of Operating Procedures and the University Catalog. Students should refer to these documents for further details.

19. Student Association for Medical Laboratory Science

The Student Association for Medical Laboratory Science is an organization open to all interested students. Students enrolled in the Medical Laboratory Science Program are encouraged to participate. The club sponsors activities designed to promote the clinical laboratory science field. Traditionally, the club has also held fundraising activities to support CLSC student attendance at the Texas Association for Medical Laboratory Science Meeting. It is the policy of the student organization that only students in good standing with a C or better in all classes will be permitted to attend the annual state meeting.

20. Degree/Certificate Requirements

Students must complete all degree requirements as stated in the catalog prior to graduation. Candidates who already possess a baccalaureate degree and the appropriate pre-admission coursework may elect to receive a certificate of completion rather than a second baccalaureate degree. Candidates for the certificate of completion must complete all CLSC coursework prior to the granting of the Certificate. Issuing of the degree or certificate is NOT contingent upon the student passing any external certification or licensure exam.

21. Application for Graduation

Students need to apply for graduation and pay appropriate fees by the deadline stated in the University Catalog. In order to participate in the December graduation ceremony, students will need to file for graduation before the stated deadline which is normally in April of the spring semester. Students are responsible for checking current deadlines for graduation.

22. Email

Students are required to activate their UTRGV email account. Instructors will utilize this tool to communicate with students. Students should check their email daily.

23. Classroom Courtesy

Students are expected to help maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. To ensure that all students have the opportunity to gain from time spent in class, students are prohibited from engaging in any form of disruptive behavior. Examples of disruptive behavior include: use of cellular phones or beepers during class, arriving late or leaving class early, missing deadlines, prolonged chattering, reading other materials during class, offensive remarks to fellow students or faculty. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom may result, minimally in a request to leave the class. Patterns of repeated behavior or more severe infractions may be referred to the Dean of Students.

24. Outside Employment

Students are advised that due to the intensive nature of a professional program, it is not feasible to work excessive hours and still carry a complete course load. Generally, students should refrain from working no more than 12 hours per week. If it is necessary for a student to work more than this amount, the student should consider selecting a part time option in the program. Students who attempt to work more than this amount often end up in serious academic difficulty.

25. Maximum Timeframe

Due to the nature of the practice-oriented curriculum, students admitted into the Medical Laboratory Science Program must complete all courses in the professional portion of the curriculum within a period of four (4) consecutive years from the date of first enrollment in the program. This maximum time frame is a deviation from the University's seven year time limit. Students are also advised that accreditation requirements may impact required courses if there is a delay in completing the normal sequence of courses in the expected timeframe.

26. Urine Drug Screening

Providing healthcare while under the influence of drugs or other alcohol creates an unsafe situation for the patient. Therefore, clinical facilities reserve the right to require students participating in a clinical experience to take and pass a urine drug screen. Students will be expected to pay for the urine drug screen and submit proof of a negative drug screen to the facility or the Program Director prior to the first day of clinical assignments. Students who fail a required urine drug test, will be ineligible for clinical assignments.

APPENDIX A

THE VAQUERO HONOR CODE

As members of a community dedicated to honesty, integrity, and mutual respect in all interactions and relationships the students, faculty and administration of our university pledge to abide by the principles in The Vaquero Honor Code.

WE ARE HONEST. We do our own work and are honest with one another in all matters. We understand how any act of dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarizing, falsifying data, and giving or receiving unauthorized assistance, conflicts as much with academic achievement as with the values of honesty and integrity.

WE HAVE INTEGRITY. We do not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do. We will make personal and academic integrity fundamental in all of our endeavors.

WE ARE RESPECTFUL. We act civilly and cooperate with one another for the common good. We will strive to create an environment and a culture in which people respect and listen to one another. We recognize a university is, above all, a place for the exchange of ideas, popular and unpopular. It is the one institution in society that encourages challenges to conventional wisdom. Consequently, we pledge to encourage the exchange of ideas and to allow others to participate and express their views openly.

The Vaquero Student Honor Statement:

I pledge I have not cheated, plagiarized, falsified data or given or received unauthorized assistance on this academic work in accordance with The Vaquero Honor Code. I further pledge to report any actions on the part of others that violate the Vaquero Honor Code according to the Student Guidelines.

Student Guidelines

- Violations of the Vaquero Honor Code should be reported to the faculty in charge of the course or the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- The identity of the student reporting violations of the Vaquero Honor Code will be confidential until such time as the student chooses to have their identity revealed.
- The Student Disciplinary Hearing and Appeal Procedures outlined in section 5.5.3 of the Handbook of Operating Procedures outlines the rights afforded to students who are accused of violating the Student Code of Conduct and the Vaquero Honor Code.

See the following website for additional information:

<http://www.utrgv.edu/en-us/student-experience/student-services/dean-of-students/vaquero-honor-code/>

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-RIO GRANDE VALLEY
Medical Laboratory Science Program
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: Chemical Hygiene Plan

It is the policy of UTRGV Medical Laboratory Science Program to have a Chemical Hygiene Plan to establish, implement, monitor, and document evidence of an ongoing program for the management of hazardous chemicals to insure that there is minimal risk to students and faculty. The person responsible for implementing the Chemical Hygiene Plan is the MLS Safety Officer.

Purpose:

This Chemical Hygiene Plan is intended to summarize policies, protocols, and procedures regarding the use of chemicals in the Medical Laboratory Science Academic and Research laboratories at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. All laboratory personnel and students involved in laboratory research efforts, teaching or student labs should be familiar with this document and the protocols which pertain to their work. All students and employees are responsible to ensure these procedures are followed. Additional information regarding the University Chemical Hygiene Plan may be found on the Environmental and Health and Safety Website.

I. General Principles

A. Minimize exposures

Precautions for handling all laboratory chemicals should be adopted. The Permissible Exposure Limits of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Threshold Limit Values of the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists should not be exceeded.

B. Do not under estimate risk

Even for substances with no known significant hazard, exposure should be minimized. Unless known otherwise, assume any mixture will be more toxic than its most toxic component and all substances of unknown toxicity are hazardous.

C. Control Exposure

If possible, substitute less toxic materials. Secondly, prevent chemical vapors and mists escaping into the atmosphere by the use of hoods and other ventilation devices. Where other controls do not adequately control the hazard, wear appropriate personal protective equipment to prevent exposures, e.g. gloves, eye protection, lab coats, or respirators. Never eat in the laboratory, store food in

refrigerators designated for chemical or biological storage, or place chemicals in a container where they might be ingested.

II. Procedures

A. Hazard Evaluation and Planning

1. Plan Ahead

Identify the potential hazards. Consider all weak links and things that could go wrong. Try to prevent their failure or occurrence. If the hazard still exists, build in safe guards and backups. Small spills may be cleaned by area personnel, larger spills require assistance from the UTRGV Occupational & Safety office. Spill kits, including absorbent material and personal protective equipment must be on site.

2. Spill Response

Assist any injured personnel. For eye or skin contact immediately remove any contaminated clothing and flush with water for 15 minutes. Seek medical attention. Promptly contain chemical spills and alert people in all parts of the facility including isolation areas or restricted areas. Clean up small spills using appropriate protective apparel and equipment. Remember to dispose of contaminated articles as hazardous waste. For large spills clear the area, call Occupational & Safety at 3690 or call the UT Police at 911. and wait for the responders to arrive at the scene.

B. Prohibited Actions.

1. Eating, Smoking or Drinking etc

Do not smell or taste chemicals. Eating, drinking, smoking, gum chewing or application of cosmetics is prohibited in areas where laboratory chemicals are present. Wash hands before conducting these activities. Food or beverages may not be stored in laboratory refrigerators, glassware or utensils which are also used for laboratory operations

2. Horseplay

Practical jokes or other behavior which might confuse, startle, or distract another worker is prohibited.

3. Mouth suction

Do not use mouth suction for pipetting or starting a siphon.

4. Student access to labs without supervision

Students performing laboratory operations are not allowed in the laboratory unless there is appropriate instructor or staff supervision.

C. Equipment and glassware

Handle and store laboratory glassware with care to avoid damage; do not use damaged glassware. Use extra care with Dewar flasks and other evacuated glass apparatus. Shield or wrap them to contain chemicals and fragments should implosion occur. Use equipment only for its designed purpose.

D. Emergency Eyewash and showers

Safety showers and eye washes are located in each laboratory. They must be well identified and must remain free from obstruction.

III. Personal Protective Equipment

Students and faculty must wear protective apparel compatible with the required degree of protection for substances being handled. This can be determined from information on the MSDS or with assistance from Occupational & Safety Programs.

A. Eye Protection

ANSI approved eye wear must be worn anytime there is the possibility for an injury to the eye. This might be a splash, mist, explosive, ultraviolet radiation or particulate hazard to the eye. Protective eye wear is required in laboratories, chemical storage rooms and designated contaminated areas where work with chemicals is being performed by any of the laboratory personnel. Appropriate protection should be made available to visitors who enter the area when chemicals are in use.

B. Gloves

Gloves should be worn whenever protection is needed against chemical or physical agents. They should be worn to handle corrosive materials, to prevent accidental exposure to toxic chemicals or with very hot or cold materials. Numerous materials are available including rubber, neoprene, butyl rubber, vinyl or leather. The appropriate glove can be determined by consulting MSDS book, the material compatibility lists available from glove manufacturers, or contacting Occupational & Safety Programs. Inspect the gloves before each use. Wash reusable ones before removal and replace them frequently to avoid contaminating yourself and other objects such as door handles. Inspect gloves before use.

C. Foot Wear

Shoes must be worn at all times in buildings where chemicals are used or stored. Perforated shoes, sandals, or open toed shoes should not be worn in laboratories where chemicals are used.

D. Clothing

Where the potential for chemical contamination exists, personal clothing that will be worn home should be covered by protective apparel. Examples include laboratory coats, aprons, shoe covers, and sleeve covers. Remove permeable protective clothing, such as laboratory coats, immediately on significant contamination. Dirty lab coats should not be worn outside of the laboratories.

IV. Engineering Controls

Where a hazard cannot be eliminated completely, mechanical means of controlling the hazard are the safest. They attempt to control the hazard typically at the source.

A. Lab Hood

Use the lab hood for operations which might result in release of toxic chemical, vapors or dust. As a rule of thumb, use a hood or other local ventilation device when working with any appreciably volatile substance.

1. Confirm adequate hood performance (ideally 100 fpm face velocity of air entering the opening) before use. Place tissue paper at the face of the hood to see if it blows inwards. All laboratory hoods are annually verified by Occupational & Safety Programs. Contact Physical Plant to request repairs.
2. Keep hood sash closed when it is not in current use.
3. Keep materials stored in hoods to a minimum and do not allow them to block the back baffles or air flow through the hood.
4. Leave the hood "on" when it is not in active use if toxic substances are stored in it or if it is uncertain whether adequate general laboratory ventilation will be maintained if it is "off". Most laboratories are designed to have the proper balance of supply and exhaust air when the hood is left on.
5. Move work toward center of hood, avoiding use of the first 6 inches behind the opening where air turbulence is greatest.

B. Biosafety Cabinets

Biological safety cabinets are typically designed to provide both worker and product protection from infectious organisms. They are equipped with high efficiency filters and may or may not exhaust air out of the laboratory. Therefore they are not acceptable for use with volatile solvents.

C. Explosion Proof Cabinets

All flammable or combustible material must be stored in explosion proof cabinets to prevent any potential injuries. Store only compatible material to prevent fire/explosion.

V. Chemical Use Procedures

A. Procurement

Before a substance is received, information on proper handling, storage, and disposal should be known to those who will be involved. All material safety data sheets (MSDS) must be maintained in the immediate area or accessed through the DEHS for chemicals being used.

B. Labels

1. Laboratory doors must have labels with an indication of the potential hazards and emergency telephone numbers of laboratory workers or supervisors.
2. No container should be accepted without an adequate identifying label. Do not remove or deface labels. Identity labels must show contents of the containers (including waste receptacles) and associated hazards.
3. Location signs should mark sites of safety showers, eyewash stations, exits, and other safety and first aid equipment.
4. All containers must be appropriately labeled including those used on a temporary basis.

C. Waste Disposal

1. Waste containers must be labeled "Hazardous Waste" and lids must be attached except when adding waste. Waste containers must be labeled with the chemical contents.
2. Follow disposal instructions as described in the Hazardous Waste Disposal Procedures of the Laboratory Safety Manual. Do not dispose of any chemicals down the sewer system, allowing it to evaporate, or placing it in the garbage.
3. All filled containers are required to have the date the container was filled on the label, and are to be removed from the laboratory within 72 hours of being filled. Notify DEHS if waste is ready for removal.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. A hazardous chemical waste is defined as any chemical that is toxic, flammable, corrosive, reactive, or capable of causing harm or serious injury to humans, animals or the environment.
2. The lab will have a clearly labeled notebook for all MSDS sheets.
3. Any person requiring to handle hazardous chemicals are materials will be provided with appropriate orientation, and equipment and on-the-job training.
4. No empty drums, buckets, jugs, pails, or any other container that has held toxic or corrosive materials or chemicals will ever be reused for anything.
5. If a large amount of hazardous chemical waste needs disposal contact UTRGV safety officer.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-RIO GRANDE VALLEY MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: STANDARD OR UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS POLICY

I. Universal precautions are intended to prevent parenteral, mucous membrane and nonintact skin exposures of health-care workers to bloodborne pathogens such as HIV and hepatitis B: (1) Because it is not always possible to determine with certainty the infectious nature of patients upon admission into the hospital, (2) because during the didactic and clinical portions of the Medical Laboratory Sciences Program students will be exposed to patients and specimens obtained from patients, and (3) due to high concentrations of certain infectious agents in blood, serum, body fluids and tissue, it must be assumed that ALL patients are infected.

- A. STANDARD UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS are to be consistently used for all patient specimens regardless of their infection status or diagnosis. Infection-control precautions designed to prevent exposure to body fluids and body substances must be rigorously adhered to by ALL STUDENTS and FACULTY providing direct patient care or having direct contact with specimens. This applies to all patients patient specimens.
- B. The Medical Laboratory Science Program will employ all feasible engineering and workplace controls as well as personal protective equipment in order to ensure the safety of faculty, students and staff. All laboratories have been designated as Biosafety Level 2 labs. With good microbiological techniques, agents present in these labs can be used safely in activities conducted on the open bench, provided the potential for producing splashes or aerosols is low. BSL-2 is appropriate when work

is done with any human-derived blood, body fluids, tissues, or primary human cell lines where the presence of an infectious agent may be unknown. Primary hazards to personnel working with these agents relate to accidental percutaneous or mucous membrane exposures, or ingestion of infectious materials. Extreme caution should be taken with contaminated needles or sharp instruments. In order to maintain, appropriate biosafety conditions, all laboratories must be locked when they are unoccupied. All students will receive safety training at the beginning of the program. Faculty will receive will receive safety training once per year.

C. **PRIMARY CONTAINMENT BARRIERS:**

All UTRGV employees and students shall routinely use appropriate barrier precautions to prevent skin and mucous-membrane exposure when contact with blood, body fluids or other infectious material is anticipated. Primary barriers include personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, gowns, and masks, as well as containment equipment such as biological safety cabinets (BSCs) when appropriate. .

D. **SHARPS AND REGULATED MEDICAL WASTE:**

Readily-available puncture resistant sharps containers, waste boxes and liners compliant with local, state, and federal regulations for disposal of needles, razors, scalpels, etc., and regulated medical waste shall be provided in the laboratories by environmental health and safety.

E. **LABORATORY RESTRICTIONS:**

In work areas where there is a reasonable likelihood of exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials, individuals:

- a. Will not eat, drink, apply cosmetics, lip balm, smoke, or handle contact lenses.
- b. Will not store food and beverages in refrigerators, freezers, incubators, shelves, cabinets, or on counter / bench tops where blood or other potentially infectious materials are present.
- c. Will not pipette or suction blood or other potentially infectious materials by mouth.
- d. Will not conduct procedures in a manner that will contribute to splashing, spraying, splattering,

II. **ENGINEERING AND WORK PRACTICE CONTROLS**

A. **HAND WASHING:** UTRGV provides readily accessible hand washing facilities in areas where blood or other potentially infectious materials are handled. Hands and other body surfaces shall be washed immediately and thoroughly if contaminated with blood or other body fluids.

1. After removal of personal protective gloves, employees shall wash hands and any other potentially contaminated skin area immediately or as soon as feasible with soap and water.

2. When hand washing facilities are not immediately available, such as at health fairs, UTRGV will provide either antiseptic cleanser in conjunction with clean cloth/paper towels, antiseptic towelettes, or waterless disinfectant such as alcohol based gels. If these alternatives are used, then the employees shall wash their hands with soap and running water as soon as feasible

B. SHARPS INJURY PREVENTION: UTRGV employees and students shall take precautions to prevent injuries during the use or disposal of needles, scalpels, broken glass, and other sharp instruments.

1. To prevent needle stick injuries, needles shall not be recapped / resheathed by hand, purposely bent or broken by hand, clipped, sheared, removed from disposable syringes, or otherwise, manipulated by hand. Used needles shall not be removed from disposable syringes, unless no feasible alternative can be demonstrated. In these instances where nondisposable syringes are used, needle removal must be accomplished through the use of a mechanical device or a one-handed technique.
2. Used, disposable syringes with needles, needles from evacuated blood collection systems, scalpel blades, and other sharp items shall be placed in puncture-resistant containers for disposal; the puncture-resistant containers shall be located as close as practical to the work area. Large-bore reusable needles shall be placed in a puncture-resistant container for transport to the reprocessing area.
3. Broken glassware, which may be contaminated, shall not be picked up directly with the hands. It shall be picked up using mechanical means such as a brush and dustpan, tongs, cotton swabs or forceps.
4. Contaminated sharps shall be discarded immediately or as soon as feasible in containers that are closeable, puncture resistant, leak proof on sides and bottom, and labeled or color coded in accordance with Chapter VIII of this ECP. Sharps disposal containers should be examined at least monthly to ensure proper function. Sharps containers are provided at no charge by the UTRGV DEHS.

C. FOOD AND DRINK: Eating, drinking, smoking, applying cosmetics or lip balm, and handling contact lenses is prohibited in areas where there is reasonable likelihood persons will be subjected to occupational exposure. Food and drink shall not be stored in refrigerators, freezers, or cabinets where blood or other potentially infectious materials are stored or in other areas of possible contamination

D. SPECIMEN HANDLING AND PROCESSING: All procedures involving blood or other potentially infectious materials shall be performed in such a manner as to minimize splashing, spraying, and aerosolization of these substances.

1. Mouth pipetting/suctioning is prohibited.
2. When working with open specimen containers, or a risk of aerosolization, spraying or splashing is present (such as when removing or replacing specimen container stoppers or snap lids), facial mucous membrane protection shall be used.
3. Specimens of blood or other potentially infectious materials shall be placed in a closeable, leak-resistant container.
 - a. If outside contamination of the primary container is likely, then a second leak-resistant container that is labeled shall be placed over the outside of the first and closed to prevent leakage during handling, processing, storage, or transport.
 - b. If puncture of the primary container is likely, it shall be placed within a leak-resistant, puncture-resistant secondary container.
4. Centrifuges will have closable lids and rotor specimen cups must have lids to prevent aerosolization during centrifugation. Label as per ECP, Chapter VIII.

E. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE):

PPE shall be used to minimize potential exposure of exposed skin, mucous membranes and street clothes to blood or body fluids. Shorts, sandals, or open sided shoes shall not be worn when working with blood or other potentially infectious materials. PPE includes, but is not limited to:

1. **Gloves** - gloves shall be worn when touching, or working with, blood and body fluids, mucous membranes, or non-intact skin of all patients, for handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids, and for performing venipuncture and other vascular access procedures. Gloves shall be changed after contact with each patient, as soon as practical when contaminated with blood or body fluids, or when damaged.

- a. Non-powdered latex examination or utility gloves are recommended.
- b. Non-latex gloves such as chloroprene, or nitrile gloves may be used if contact dermatitis or allergic reaction occurs with latex. Disposable vinyl gloves are not recommended due to the loose-fitting nature.
- c. Disposable gloves shall not be washed, reused, or used for touching “clean” surfaces (keyboards, telephones, etc.)
- d. Gloves that are cracked, peeling, torn, punctured, or show other signs of deterioration, shall be discarded.
- e. Gloves shall be removed prior to leaving the work area and shall not be worn in public areas.

2. **Latex Allergy / Sensitivity** – students or employees wearing natural rubber latex gloves who notice redness, itching, hives, or experience allergy-like symptoms (watery eyes, runny nose, etc.), should notify their instructor or supervisor immediately and follow the National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH) recommendations.

- a. Severe allergic reactions may require medical attention.

b. Students or employees who know they have latex allergy should report this immediately so that appropriate steps can be taken.

c. Contact the Environmental Health & Safety office for assistance with latex allergy / sensitivity issues.

3 . **Facial Mucous Membrane Protection** - masks and protective eyewear, or chin length face shields shall be worn during procedures that are likely to cause splashing, spattering, spraying or generate aerosols of blood or other body fluids (i.e. pipetting, vortexing), or when working with open specimen containers, to prevent accidental bloodborne pathogen exposure to the mucous membranes of the mouth, nose, and eyes. Tabletop clear acrylic or plastic shields may also be used for facial protection.

4. **Outer Protective Garments** – Students and employees will wear appropriate protective clothing such as fluid resistant gowns, labcoats, or aprons for body areas not shielded by gloves and face protection. These protective garments shall be worn during procedures that are likely to generate splashes of blood or other body fluids. All personal protective equipment shall be removed immediately upon leaving the lab area, and placed in an appropriately labeled designated area, or container, for storage, or disposal.

F. **CONTAMINATED WORK SURFACES:** All equipment, environmental, and working surfaces contaminated with blood or other potentially infectious materials shall be periodically decontaminated with an appropriate, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered anti-microbial product (i.e. Lysol, Amphyl, Wex-Cide, etc.), or a 1:100 to 1:10 dilution of household bleach (5.25% – 6.00% sodium hypochlorite), as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). OSHA requires that an EPA-registered tuberculocidal product (<http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/chemregindex.htm>), or 1:100 to 1:10 dilution of household bleach, made fresh daily, be used to disinfect any blood spills. In general, a 1:100 dilution of household bleach (500 ppm Chlorine) is used for general cleaning of non-porous environmental surfaces and a 1:10 dilution (5000 ppm Chlorine) is used for decontamination when a spill of blood or OPIM occurs. Refer to the UTRGV *Biological Safety Handbook* section on *Disinfections and Sterilization* for additional

III. POSTING AND LABELING REQUIREMENTS

POSTING AND LABELING REQUIREMENTS

Areas where blood or other potentially infectious materials are handled, processed, or stored shall have the biohazard label posted. Additionally, labels shall be affixed to containers used with these potentially infectious materials.

A. **BIOHAZARD WARNING LABELS:** These shall be affixed to containers of potentially infectious waste; refrigerators, and freezers containing blood and other potentially infectious

materials; and other containers used to store or transport blood or other potentially infectious materials.

1. Labels required by this section shall include the biohazard symbol and the word “Biohazard.” These labels shall be fluorescent orange or orange-red, or predominantly so, with lettering and biohazard symbol in a contrasting color. Written wording shall be provided in English, and also in Spanish where required [i.e. – medical waste containers as per 30 TAC Part 1, Subchapter Y 330.1004(i)(4)].

2. Labels shall either be an integral part of the container or shall be affixed as close as safely possible to the container by string, wire, adhesive, or other method that prevents their loss or unintentional removal.



BASIC LABORATORY SAFETY RULES:

1. All specimens from patients known to have hepatitis B or AIDS will not be brought by the instructor into a student laboratory. However, due to the “universal precautions” policy, it is no longer required that these patients be identified so all specimens must be treated as potentially infectious
2. Gloves. Must be worn when handling ALL specimens. Hands should always be washed before and after contact with patients and specimens. Hands should be washed even when gloves have been used. If hands come in contact with blood, body fluids or human tissue they should be immediately washed with soap and water, the supervisor or supervisor should be notified, and an incident report should be initiated.
3. Protective, disposable, lab coats (buttoned) will be worn when processing specimens. Torn, damaged or visibly contaminated lab coats must be discarded.
4. All benches will be washed down with a suitable disinfectant (i.e. 10% bleach or 10% amphyll solution) before and after each laboratory session. **10% bleach solution is unstable and must be made fresh daily.**
5. When working with highly contagious organisms, such as fungi, or where the danger of splashing or aerosolization exists, work will be performed in the isolation hood with the circulation system in operation. If working with chemicals in a sink area, masks, goggles, plastic aprons and protective gloves should be worn if splashing or aerosolization is anticipated.
6. Bacterial or viral organisms known to be of a highly contagious nature will not be

brought into the student laboratory by faculty. However, during the clinical practicum, when working with highly contagious organisms, or if they are suspected to be present, work will be performed in the biological safety isolation hood.

7. Avoid aerosolization of biohazards by covering all caps when removing the stopper from a vacutainer tube. Operations which might produce aerosols should be performed in a hood. A safety shield or face mask should be worn when there is danger of splashing or aerosol production.
8. All non-sharp contaminated materials will be double sacked in biohazard bags. Bags will be closed with the rubber bands provided and placed in the appropriate containers for disposal.
9. Biohazardous sharps and glass will be placed in the properly designated biohazard puncture-proof container for disposal. Needles will not be bent, sheared, or resheathed, but placed directly into the safety container designated for needles and syringes.
10. Non-contaminated glass will be placed in the properly designated box for disposal.
11. The laboratory is restricted to entry only by authorized individuals. The laboratories will remain locked when not in use. Students are NOT allowed in lab without an instructor.
12. No smoking, drinking, eating, application of cosmetics, or combing of hair will be permitted.
13. No mouth pipetting is allowed. Safety pipetting devices are available and must be used.
14. Keep personal items in storage and out of the lab as much as possible. Carrying such items into and out of the lab increases the risk of spreading pathogens and other hazards outside the lab environment.
15. All biohazardous materials must be labeled as such.
16. Hands will be washed often and will be kept away from the face, eyes, or any broken skin surfaces (s).
17. If the student should visibly contaminate, puncture, cut or tear a glove, the gloves should be removed, hands washed thoroughly, and new gloves put on.
18. All accidents will be reported to the instructor or supervisor and must be

documented, no matter how minor they may appear.

19. Disposable laboratory coats and gloves will be left in the laboratory and not worn beyond the doorway of the laboratory. Racks are provided in the laboratory for this.
20. No food or drink will be stored in refrigerators that contain specimens or reagents.
21. Spills should be reported immediately to the instructor so that proper clean-up procedures can be initiated.
22. Nothing should be placed in one's mouth, including pencils, pens, fingers, etc.
23. Centrifuges should not be operated without covers. Prior to securely closing the cover, the centrifuge should be checked to make sure it is balanced. The covers should remain closed until the equipment has stopped operating. Never stop centrifuges by hand.
24. Cultures and clinical specimens should be disposed of in the appropriate biohazard containers. Small urine containers may be emptied into the sink. The entire sink and surrounding area should be decontaminated with 10% bleach.
25. The following materials are NOT TO BE AUTOCLAVED:
 - a. pressurized cans
 - b. carcinogenic chemicals
 - c. flammable solvents
 - d. explosive materials
 - e. specimens in vacuum/suction bottles
26. Uncontaminated paper should never be placed into the biohazard or glass and sharps containers.
27. Reusable contaminated glassware and equipment should be placed in a stainless steel or plastic container that is half-filled with 10% amphyll or other appropriate phenolic solution.
28. Each student is responsible for cleaning and maintaining his/her own work area. All equipment and reagents should be returned to their proper storage area prior to leaving the laboratory. Prior to leaving the laboratory, students are responsible for turning off their lights, incinerators, water baths, temp blocks, autoclave or other equipment in use, and refrigerating reagents and specimens. A dirty laboratory is a safety hazard!
29. Equipment should be decontaminated following any spills and before servicing.

30. When working with hazardous and extremely hazardous chemicals, it is mandatory to wear safety goggles, rubber gloves, and protective aprons.
31. All chemicals, working reagent bottles and disinfectants must be properly labeled with the name, concentration, date of preparation, expiration date, and initials of person who prepared the reagent.
32. When acids are diluted, the acid should be added to the water and it should be done near or in the sink.
33. Heat resistant gloves and/or tongs must be used to handle hot glass or when removing hot materials from the autoclave.
34. Proper autoclave safety must be followed and the internal pressure must be allowed to return to zero before the door is opened. All students and personnel must be trained on proper use of the autoclave prior to use.
39. Personal Apparel: Long hair and loose clothing must be confined. Sandals, perforated shoes, or open-toed shoes are prohibited.
40. Personal Housekeeping: Keep the work area clean and uncluttered. Properly label and store chemicals and equipment. Clean up the work area at the beginning and end of each lab period with 10% amphyl or a 10% bleach solution. 10% bleach solution must be made up fresh daily or the solution loses its potency.
41. Avoid the use of contact lenses in the laboratory unless necessary
42. All students and laboratory personnel should know the location of the safety shower and eye wash as well the proper operation of this safety equipment.

**SAFETY DOCUMENT
VERIFICATION OF RECEIPT**

I have read the safety procedures in this manual which conform to the current procedures required for safe practice in the laboratory. I understand that The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley Medical Laboratory Science Program is required to inform me of hazards to which I might be exposed during my student didactic and clinical year. I understand the procedures and consequences set forth in this document and know that I will be expected to abide by these rules during clinical practicums as well as in the student laboratory on campus. Additionally, I know that I must learn and abide by the safety procedures required by the institution where I will be assigned for my clinical practicum courses.

I understand I must abide by the Face Covering Protocols and social distancing set by UTRGV while on campus.

I understand I will self-screen and report prior to coming to campus for face to face lectures and labs.

Student Signature

Date

Student Name (please print)

Faculty Witness

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

I, _____ will not reveal any information concerning patients to anyone not authorized to receive this information. I further acknowledge that I will not discuss the individual's identity nor their physical or psychological condition. If I do so, I realize that I will subject to appropriate disciplinary action including suspension from clinical courses.

Student Signature

Date

Faculty Witness

Date

APPENDIX D

INFORMATION RELEASE

I hereby grant permission for faculty to release information related to my performance in the Medical Laboratory Science Program when requested to do so as a reference on my behalf. I understand that I am not required to grant this permission.

I grant permission
 I do not grant permission

Permission granted only after written request by me for faculty to serve as reference.

Student Signature

Date

APPENDIX E

**RELEASE OF INFORMATION
FOR
OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT**

I hereby grant permission for my employer to release information related to my performance to the Medical Laboratory Science Program at the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley. This information will be used as part of the outcomes assessment process and accreditation process.

This information will be kept confidential and will only be used to evaluate my pre-professional education. I understand that I am not required to grant this permission.

I grant permission
 I do not grant permission

Student Signature

Date

APPENDIX F

APPENDIX F

VERIFICATION OF RECEIPT AND DISCUSSION
OF
STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS IN
MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES

I have read and I understand the policies and information contained in this Manual of
“Standards and Expectations for Students in Medical Laboratory Science”.

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Revised August 23, 2022