



Clinical Experience

During the spring semester of the second year as an MLT Major, students enroll in MDLT 2591 Clinical Practice, a course which provides a clinical experience at one or more affiliate hospital/clinical laboratories. An affiliation agreement between the college and the affiliate identifies responsibilities of all parties involved. At the affiliate, students work under the supervision of certified laboratorians designated as “bench faculty.” Bench faculty train students, and evaluate their technical abilities, theoretical background, and affective skills. These professionals work closely with Saint Paul College MLT faculty to ensure educational experiences are appropriate and to communicate student progress. Students spend time in each of the main areas of the laboratory according to a pre-defined schedule. Saint Paul College MLT Faculty provide extensive educational materials (including departmental objectives and skill checklists) to each affiliate, designating prescribed competencies. The Clinical Practice experience allows students to apply knowledge learned in the didactic phase of schooling in an employment-like setting. In addition to spending face-to-face time in the affiliated laboratory, students also complete assigned pre-clinical and post-clinical virtual activities according to a defined schedule. Pre-clinical activities are designed to provide students with a refresher on foundational material so that students enter the clinical experience prepared with background knowledge. The post-clinical activities are designed to reinforce theory in the various laboratory departments and can serve as preparation for success in MDLT 2593 Comprehensive Exams and the national certification exam graduates take. MDLT 2591 Clinical Practice also includes 3-4 “On-Campus Sessions” during which MLT faculty provide instruction that addresses important topics to help enable student success: Dealing With Difficult People, Professionalism in the Laboratory, Employment Topics (Resumes/Interviewing/Job Seeking), Degree Advancement, Continuing Education Requirements and Certification Exam Preparation..

The MLT Clinical Coordinator, with input from the MLT Program Director and faculty, makes affiliate placement decisions, striving to place students in the best setting for their unique learning needs. However, there is no guarantee of this due to the variation and unpredictability of affiliate availability each year. Many affiliates choose to interview students for potential Clinical Practice placement within their facilities. In these cases, the placement decisions are made by the affiliate interview team. Affiliate placement decisions are completed in the middle of fall semester of the second year. When the number of enrolled students exceeds the number of clinical affiliates, students are designated as alternates based on the date of Application to the MLT Major. If a student is selected for clinical placement based on interview by the affiliate, this supersedes the application date ranking. Students sign a form indicating their acknowledgement of this policy.

Clinical Partners (Affiliates)

- Allina Hospitals and Clinics
- Fairview Health System
- HealthPartners
- North Memorial Health
- Ridgeview Medical Center
- Osceola Medical Center
- St. Croix Regional Medical Center
- Metro Urology

Service Work Policy

At no time should students be utilized in such a way that they are substituted for regular staff during the clinical practice portion of their education. Students, with qualified supervision, may be permitted to perform procedures after demonstrating proficiency. Service work by students in clinical settings outside of academic hours must be noncompulsory. It is acceptable for a clinical affiliate to allow a MLT student intern to release results without assistance from a bench tech for waived test procedures if the student has proven competency and this competency is documented by the affiliate. Performance of such tests is only acceptable as part of the student educational experience. Students cannot be utilized as regular staff at the affiliate.

NAACLS does not identify a minimum number of successful blood draws required for MLT students. However, NAACLS maintains that students must achieve competency. The service work policy described above applies to this laboratory skill also. Therefore, phlebotomy performed after attaining competency is “voluntary and not mandated by suggestion or pressure.”

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