

# DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES

**Melissa Jamerson, Ph.D., MLS(ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>**  
Associate professor and chair

[mls.chp.vcu.edu \(https://mls.chp.vcu.edu/\)](https://mls.chp.vcu.edu/)

The Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences supports the philosophy and mission of the university and the College of Health Professions, and provides an environment that nurtures excellence in education, research and service. The programs offered by the department are dedicated to enhancing and promoting medical laboratory science. The department fosters fair and equitable educational experiences for students of all ages and diverse backgrounds. Strong affiliations with clinical educators and the integration of innovative technology in the academic setting facilitate both the education and research goals of the department.

The department provides students with superior studies in medical laboratory science, including both theoretical and applied clinical education, and develops problem-solving expertise, leadership capabilities and communication skills. By providing advanced theoretical and technical education, the graduate program serves to maintain and update the competency of laboratory professionals and to prepare students to assume roles as laboratory supervisors, university educators and researchers. A mature, responsible approach to the acquisition of knowledge is cultivated in order to establish continuing intellectual growth and an enthusiasm for the profession.

The department meets the growing health care needs of the community by providing highly competent and professional medical laboratory scientists who will be able to function effectively upon entrance into the field and be prepared to explore future scientific and technological advances in laboratory science. And the department promotes continued professional development and personal growth for the faculty and staff to fulfill and balance the individual's abilities and aspirations with the departmental, college and institutional mission and needs. Members of the department conduct themselves in a forthright, ethical manner and practice the highest standard of quality performance.

The objectives of the Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences are:

- To provide an educational program that prepares students to accurately perform and evaluate analytical tests on body fluids, cells and products
- To foster the development of professional conduct, interpersonal communication skills and ethical principles
- To develop and promote strategies for lifelong learning and to encourage continued professional growth through research, continued education and active participation in professional societies

## History

Clinical and medical laboratory scientists have been trained on the MCV Campus since 1927. However, the Department (formerly school) of Medical Technology was not formally established until 1952, at which time the curriculum included six months of didactic experience with lectures and laboratory sessions held in the department, followed by a six-month rotation through the clinical laboratories. The school offered a certificate and/or bachelor's degree program; the certificate program was discontinued during the 1961-62 school year.

In 1974 the curriculum was expanded to the current two-plus-two year program in which students complete 60 semester hours of prerequisites followed by two years of professional course work. The graduate program in medical laboratory sciences was started in 1967 to provide advanced education for certified medical technologists/clinical laboratory scientists. In 1985 the program was modified to allow candidates holding a degree in another area of science to obtain graduate education in medical laboratory sciences.

In 1994, the department name was changed to the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences. In 2003, an accelerated track was initiated to integrate the undergraduate and graduate programs, which requires completion of two years of prerequisites and three years of full-time professional course work, and leads to the simultaneous awarding of both the bachelor's and master's degrees.

To aggressively address the critical shortage of clinical laboratory scientists and meet the growing staffing needs of rural Virginia, in 2014 the department began its delivery of the Bachelor of Science using facilities at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon, Virginia. Students receive their curriculum of study via two-way synchronous distance education and clinical training rotations in southwest Virginia and eastern Tennessee.

In 2020, the department was approved for a name change and became the Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences.

## Facilities

The Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences is located at the College of Health Professions building at 900 East Leigh Street on the MCV Campus. Faculty and clerical offices are located in this facility, as well as student classrooms, general teaching laboratory, study areas and a student lounge. Classrooms and a general teaching laboratory are also present at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center at One Partnership Circle, Abingdon, Virginia.

Students who complete the requirements for the below will receive a Master of Science in Laboratory Sciences.

- Medical Laboratory Sciences, Master of Science (M.S.) (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-allied-health-professions/medical-laboratory-sciences/medical-laboratory-sciences-ms/>)
- Medical Laboratory Sciences, Master of Science (M.S.), advanced master's concentration (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-allied-health-professions/medical-laboratory-sciences/medical-laboratory-sciences-ms-advanced-masters-concentration/>)
- Medical Laboratory Sciences, Master of Science (M.S.), categorical concentration (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-allied-health-professions/medical-laboratory-sciences/medical-laboratory-sciences-ms-categorical-concentration/>)
- Medical Laboratory Sciences, Master of Science (M.S.) with a concentration in public health laboratory sciences