



**RURAL HEALTH OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM (RHOP)
PROGRAM STANDARDS for the MEDICAL LABORATORY
SCIENCE OPTION
Participants and Alternates**

PHILOSOPHY

The Rural Health Opportunities Program (RHOP) is a cooperative program between the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), Chadron State College (CSC), Wayne State College (WSC), and Peru State College (PSC). The purpose of the Program is to recruit and educate traditional and non-traditional students from rural Nebraska that are interested in a career in one of nine health care professions with the expectation that each person will return to rural Nebraska to practice. The program represents a commitment and dedication to the education of Nebraskans and quality health care for the citizens of the state.

COURSE WORK

1. Each participant and alternate (hereafter referred to collectively as students) must complete required coursework and earn a minimum of 77 semester hours. The current course prerequisites are listed on the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) Program website at <https://www.unmc.edu/alliedhealth/education/mls/admission/index.html>.
2. Students are required to complete the designated course of study to earn a minimum of 77 semester hours towards a bachelor's degree in three academic years (at least six semesters of continuous study). Any exception to this time schedule must be approved by the MLS State College Director of Health Professions and the MLS Program Director.
3. Students must obtain approval from the undergraduate MLS State College Mentor before registering for or dropping any class.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

To remain in good standing and continue in the NSC phase of the RHOP MLS Option, the following Academic Standards will apply:

1. Students must earn a "C-" or better in the **required courses**.
2. Students must maintain a **cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or higher to remain in the RHOP Pipeline**.
3. Students must maintain a **Science GPA of 2.5 or higher and/or GPA for last 20 Science hours or 2.5 or higher to remain in the RHOP Pipeline**.

4. **Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher to be eligible to receive the RHOP scholarship.**

ACADEMIC PROBATION

RHOP academic probation will be allowed for only **one** semester subsequent to the spring semester of the RHOP student's freshman year. RHOP academic probation results if a student:

1. Earns less than a "C-" in a **required** course. The course must be retaken and the student will be placed on RHOP academic probation the following semester.
2. Does not maintain a cumulative GPA of a 2.5 or higher.
3. Withdraws from one or more classes which results in dropping below the required full-time academic enrollment status (12 credit hours per semester).
4. Withdraws from all classes without prior approval of the State College Director of Health Professions and the MLS Program Director.

DISMISSAL

Dismissal from RHOP constitutes formal action by the UNMC MLS Program in consultation with the NSC institution. Reasons that may lead to dismissal from the RHOP program include failure to:

1. Comply with the terms of an academic probation.
2. Complete all of the recommendations for improving academic performance.
3. Obtain a grade of "C-" or better in a required course that has been retaken.
4. Raise their cumulative GPA to a 2.5 or higher after one semester of remediation.
5. Satisfactorily complete the NSC phase coursework as defined by the academic standards for good standing.
6. Satisfactorily complete the professional development requirements.
7. Immediate dismissal from RHOP may result from illegal or unprofessional behavior. A copy of the dismissal notice and terms provided to the student by the NSC (undergraduate) institution will be shared with the MLS Program Director.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Each participant and alternate must write a journal chronicling their activities that enhance their understanding of the art and practice of medical lab science, motivates them to become a health care professional in rural Nebraska, or enhance their professional development. The student is also expected to record their reactions to and their perceptions of the events to which they have been exposed. The journals must be developed on a computer so that a copy can be emailed upon request. A copy of the Journal must be submitted to the Health Professions Office at the end of each semester. The journal is the only record of a student's shadowing and other activities that enhance their professional development. Failure to adequately complete this requirement can be cause for dismissal from the program.
2. Shadowing of health care providers on a regular basis is expected. Some of the shadowing experiences must be in rural Nebraska so the student develops significant knowledge of what it is like to practice as a physician in rural Nebraska. This requirement can be completed during the summer, school vacations, or during school.

All shadowing experiences must be noted in the journal. Each participant and alternate must always remember that the function of the Medical Lab Science Option of RHOP is to recruit and prepare people for practicing in rural Nebraska. Hopefully, each student will develop a professional association with one or more practicing medical lab scientists in rural Nebraska.

3. Each student must visit UNMC on the regularly scheduled RHOP trips, as arranged by UNMC and the individual responsible for RHOP coordination at the undergraduate institution. RHOP students are also expected to attend and participate in all RHOP activities including meetings, hospital field trips, speakers, tours, volunteer activities, and all other events sponsored by RHOP.
4. Each RHOP student must participate in on-campus activities that enhance their abilities to interact with people. This would include being an active member in the Health Professions Club, meetings with health care providers, helping with Health Professions Showcase and RHOP interviews. Off-campus activities such as being a camp counselor, mission work, etc. are encouraged.
5. Each RHOP student should return to their high school at least once during their studies to promote RHOP.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE NSC PHASE

CHANGING DATE OF ENTRY PROCEDURE

Any RHOP student wishing to change the date of admission into the professional phase of the program must petition in writing to both the State College Health Professions Director and the MLS Program Director. The petition should state the reasons for the requested change, the proposed new date of admission, and what academic preparation will continue for entry into the UNMC MLS Program. A decision to approve the change will be made as soon as possible after the request submission.

ALTERNATE TRANSITION TO PARTICIPANT STATUS

In the event that any of the candidates selected as participants in this class and in this option decide not to accept a position, withdraw after entering the program, or are dismissed from the program, the MLS Program Director and the NSC institution may select a replacement among the alternates in the same matriculating cohort. Academic accomplishments, progress within the curriculum, and participation in professional development activities will be considered in the selection of an alternate to fill each vacancy. A second interview by the MLS Program may be requested. Each alternate maintains their MLS alternate status as long as they are enrolled full-time in the undergraduate program, and have met all of the academic, course work and professional development requirements.

ENTRANCE INTO THE PROFESSIONAL PHASE

While successful completion of the requirements for the NSC phase of the MLS option will normally guarantee admission to the UNMC professional phase of the program, participants must demonstrate their successful completion by means of a formal application during the undergraduate final year. Prior to matriculation into the professional phase, the participant must:

1. Meet all academic standards and professional development expectations throughout the undergraduate phase.

2. Meet all admission requirements for the UNMC MLS Program.
3. Complete UNMC's MLS admission process by the designated deadlines of their junior year to include submitting an online application and interview.

As a routine practice, students applying via RHOP are assigned a primary clinical practicum site outside of Omaha and Lincoln.

PERSONAL BEHAVIOR

Participants and alternates must exhibit professional and personal behaviors that reflect positively on them, the University of Nebraska Medical Center, and Chadron State College. The students must remember that this includes summers and vacations. The students in RHOP are expected to comply with all campus standards of behavior as described in the CSC Student Handbook, as well as RHOP standards **which includes attending classes as scheduled, promptness, exhibiting respect towards fellow students and faculty, displaying initiative and leadership skills. They are also expected to obey all laws and thus, avoid having any criminal charges brought against them.** Failure to comply with these requirements may result in disciplinary action including dismissal from RHOP. The students must also remember that drug and alcohol offenses, felony convictions, etc. can prevent them from getting a license to practice their profession.

RESIGNATION PROCEDURE

Should a participant or alternate choose to resign their position in RHOP, a formal letter of resignation must be filed with the academic advisor and Health Professions office as soon as possible.

