

Merritt College Histotechnician Program

Student Handbook

2025-2026

Revised July 2025

Program Accreditation

The Merritt Histotechnician Program is accredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS), 5600 N River Rd, Des Plaines, IL 60018; 773-714-8880, info@naaccls.org

Non-Discrimination Policy

Merritt College is proud to promote the pursuit of academic excellence for all students and staff members. Educational services and programs are available to provide support and enrichment. Merritt College will provide all available services without regard to race, color, age, sex, religious creed, marital status, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation. Discrimination, in any form, will not be tolerated.

Contents

Program Accreditation	1
Non-Discrimination Policy	1
Introduction	4
Admission Requirements	4
Program Mission	4
Program Goals	4
Essential Functions for Admission and Success of Students	5
Histotechnician Program NAACLS Entry Level Competencies	7
Certificate Program	7
Prerequisite Course Assessment	7
Transfer Coursework	8
Histotechnician Curriculum – Certificate of Achievement	8
Attendance	8
Program Grade Requirements	9
Work Experience Credit	9
Advising, Counseling and Grievances	9
Advising	9
Merritt Histotechnician Program Dismissal Policy	10
Clinical Rotation Policies	10
Clinical Placement	11
Service Work Policy	11
Dress Code Policy for Rotations	12
Background Checks and Drug Testing	13
Confidentiality of Patient Information and Results	13
Current Clinical Rotation Affiliates	13
Clinical Student Evaluation	13

Clinical Grievance Policy.....	13
Student Injury Policy	14
Health Policy.....	14
Tuition, Fees and Refunds	14
Financial Aid.....	14
Scholarships	14
ASCP Board of Certification Exam	15
ASCP Histotechnician (HT) Certification Exam Eligibility	15
ASCP Certification Exam Application Fees.....	15
ASCP Examination Format.....	15
ASCP HT Examination Grading.....	16
ASCP Re-examination	16
ASCP Credential Maintenance Program	16
Passing Certification Exam Not Required for Awarding Degree or Certificate.....	16
Graduation.....	16
Merritt Histotechnician Program Faculty.....	17

Introduction

Merritt College, located at 12500 Campus Drive in Oakland, is one of four campuses operated by the Peralta Community College District.

The Histotechnician program provides on-campus and on-site technical training, focusing on routine tissue sample preparation, special stains and techniques such as immunohistochemistry, in situ hybridization, fluorescence microscopy and genomics. Training on campus will utilize samples routinely prepared in both clinical and research facilities. As part of the formal training, students will work through study guides provided by the American Society of Clinical Pathology (ASCP) for its certification examination. Students will work with samples typically observed in clinical and research facilities.

Partnerships with local facilities will allow for work experience and internship sites, required for Histotechnician certificate graduates, and will provide further training for those interested in research and/or careers in the private sector.

Students become eligible to sit for the HT ASCP board of certification exam by earning a certificate by completing all necessary coursework and a clinical rotation OR complete all coursework and work in the field for one year.

The Merritt College Histotechnician Program enrolls 15 to a maximum of 36 students per cohort.

Program Website <http://www.merritt.edu/wp/histotech/>

Admission Requirements

Merritt College is a public institution, wherein admission cannot be denied to applicants. Currently, there is no application process or selection process for the Merritt College Histotechnician Program.

To complete the NAACLS approved histotechnician program and receive a **Histotechnician Certificate of Achievement**, you must complete a chemistry course, a microbiology course, and a human anatomy and physiology series (19-20 units). These courses do have prerequisites. It is recommended that you speak with a counselor about completing these courses before, during, or after completing the histotechnician certificate specific courses.

Program Mission

The mission of the Merritt College Histotechnician Program is to prepare students to enter the workforce as qualified, employable histologic professionals in the health care industry, and pharmaceutical and biomedical research. This program teaches students to act ethically and respectfully, and to develop skills applicable to the histology profession and the patients served.

Program Goals

The Merritt College Histotechnician Program will educate and train students for work as histotechnician by providing the theoretical and technical training necessary to prepare a student to enter the job market as an entry level competent histotechnician

Essential Functions for Admission and Success of Students

The faculty of the Merritt College Histotechnician Program has specified the following non-academic criteria which all applicants and enrolled students are expected to meet to thrive in the program's setting and in professional practice.

1. **Observation.** The applicant/student must be able to actively participate in demonstrations, laboratory exercises, and clinical experiences. Analysis of tissue samples is critical in the Histotechnician/Histotechnologist profession; functional use of visual and somatic sensations is required.
2. **Communication.** The applicant/student must be able to effectively communicate with fellow students, faculty, staff, and members of clinical affiliations. Speaking, reading, and writing are essential skills.
3. **Motor.** The applicant/student must have sufficient motor skills to perform manual and automated techniques associated with tissue sample preparation and analysis.
4. **Intellectual/Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities.** The applicant/student must be able to measure, reason, calculate, analyze, evaluate and synthesize; long periods of concentration, an understanding of spatial relationships of structures, and the ability to complete tasks in a timely manner are necessary skills.
5. **Behavioral/Social Attributes.** The applicant/student must possess emotional health required for full utilization of his or her intellectual abilities. Applicants must be able to develop mature and effective relationships with fellow students, faculty, staff and working professionals. Additionally, applicants must be able to endure potentially taxing workloads and adapt to high stress environments, particularly in clinical settings.

ASCLS CODE OF ETHICS

PREAMBLE

The Code of Ethics of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science sets forth the principles and standards by which Medical Laboratory Professionals and students admitted to professional education programs practice their profession.

I. DUTY TO THE PATIENT

Medical Laboratory Professionals' primary duty is to the patient, placing the welfare of the patient above their own needs and desires and ensuring that each patient receives the highest quality of care according to current standards of practice. High quality laboratory services are safe, effective, efficient, timely, equitable, and patient-centered. Medical Laboratory Professionals work with all patients and all patient samples without regard to disease state, ethnicity, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Medical Laboratory Professionals prevent and avoid conflicts of interest that undermine the best interests of patients.

Medical Laboratory Professionals are accountable for the quality and integrity of the laboratory services they provide. This obligation includes maintaining the highest level of individual competence as patient needs change yet practicing within the limits of their level of practice. Medical Laboratory Professionals exercise sound judgment in all aspects of laboratory services they provide. Furthermore, Medical Laboratory Professionals safeguard patients from others' incompetent or illegal practice through identification and appropriate reporting of instances where the integrity and high quality of laboratory services have been breached.

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 patients and other health care professionals. Medical Laboratory Professionals respect patients' rights to make decisions regarding their own medical care.

II. DUTY TO COLLEAGUES AND THE PROFESSION

Medical Laboratory Professionals uphold the dignity and respect of the profession and maintain a reputation of honesty, integrity, competence, and reliability. Medical Laboratory Professionals contribute to the advancement of the profession by improving and disseminating 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 accept the responsibility to establish the qualifications for entry to the profession, to implement those qualifications through participation in licensing and certification programs, to uphold those qualifications in hiring practices, and to recruit and educate students in accredited programs to achieve those qualifications.

Medical Laboratory Professionals establish cooperative, honest, and respectful working relationships within the clinical laboratory and with all members of the healthcare team 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 wellbeing of society. Medical Laboratory Professionals serve as patient advocates. They apply their expertise to improve patient healthcare outcomes by eliminating barriers to access to laboratory services and promoting equitable distribution of healthcare resources.

Medical Laboratory Professionals comply with relevant laws and regulations pertaining to the practice of Clinical Laboratory Science and actively seek, to change those laws and regulations that do not meet the high standards of care and practice.

PLEDGE TO THE PROFESSION

As a Medical Laboratory Professional, I pledge to uphold my duty to Patients, the Profession and Society by:

- Placing patients' welfare above my own needs and desires.
- Ensuring that each patient receives care that is safe, effective, efficient, timely, equitable and patient-centered.
- Maintaining the dignity and respect for my profession.
- Promoting the advancement of my profession.
- Ensuring collegial relationships within the clinical laboratory and with other patient care providers.
- Improving access to laboratory services.
- Promoting equitable distribution of healthcare resources.
- Complying with laws and regulations and protecting patients from others' incompetent or illegal practice
- Changing conditions where necessary to advance the best interests of patients.

Reference: <https://www.ascls.org/about-us/code-of-ethics>

Histotechnician Program NAACLS Entry Level Competencies

The following is from the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) Standards for Accredited and Approved Programs. At career entry, the histotechnician will be able to perform routine histologic procedures such as:

- A. Receiving and accessioning tissue specimens;
- B. Preparing tissue specimens for microscopic examinations, including all routine procedures;
- C. Assisting with gross examination and frozen section procedures in histopathology;
- D. Identifying tissue structures and their staining characteristics;
- E. Performing preventive and corrective maintenance of equipment and instruments or referring to appropriate sources for repairs;
- F. Recognizing factors that affect procedures and results, and taking appropriate action within predetermined limits when corrections are indicated;
- G. Performing and monitoring quality control within predetermined limits;
- H. Applying principles of safety;
- I. Demonstrating professional conduct and interpersonal communication skills with patients, laboratory personnel, other health care professionals, and with the public;
- J. Recognizing the responsibilities of other laboratory and healthcare professionals and interacting with them with respect for their jobs and patient care;
- K. Recognizing and acting upon individual needs for continuing education as a function of growth and maintenance of professional competence; and,
- L. Exercising principles of management, safety, and supervision, as the primary analyst making specimen-oriented decisions on predetermined criteria, including a working knowledge of criteria values. Communications skills will extend to frequent interactions with members of the healthcare team, external relations, customer service, and patient education. The levels of analysis range from routine tissue processing to complex histopathology laboratory procedures in the various major areas of anatomic pathology. The histotechnician will have diverse functions in areas of pre-analytic, analytic, and post-analytic processes. The histotechnician will have responsibilities for information processing, training, and quality control monitoring wherever histologic procedures are performed.

Certificate Program

Students must complete the Histotechnician Certificate of Achievement program of study which includes fulfilling a 240-hour clinical rotation requirement, to become eligible to sit for the ASCP Board of Certification exam, as indicated by Route 1 of the ASCP eligibility guidelines.

Prerequisite Course Assessment

Most classes have prerequisites that require assessment before registration for the course. Prior to taking placement tests, an application for admission must be submitted.

Transfer Coursework

All coursework taken at another college, in or outside of the United States, requires evaluation by a Counselor and the Program Director. The student is responsible for requesting a variance from the Program Director. The Bioscience Department Director and the Division II Dean must approve the variance once completed; the variance will be forwarded to the Admissions office for verification and recording.

Histotechnician Curriculum – Certificate of Achievement

Major Prerequisites

Group A: Human Anatomy and Physiology

BIOL 2 Human Anatomy 5 units

BIOL 4 Human Physiology 5 units

or

BIOL 20A Human Anatomy and Physiology 5 units

BIOL 20B Human Anatomy and Physiology 5 units

Group B: Chemistry

CHEM 1A General Chemistry 5 units

or

CHEM 30A Introductory General Chemistry 4 units

Group C: Microscopy

BIOL 3 Microbiology 5 units

Major Core Courses

BIOSC 9 General Histology 5 units

BIOSC 30 Genomics Theory 4 units

or BIOSC 50 Genetic Diseases 5 units

BIOSC 55 Beginning Histotechniques 5 units

BIOSC 56 Advanced Histotechniques 5 units

BIOSC 101 Theory and Practice of Microscopy 6 units

BIOSC 102 Fluorescence Microscopy and Specimen Prep 6 units

Total Units 55-56 units

Optional and available on invitation only.

BIOSC 476G Occupational Work Experience in Histotechnology 4 units

Attendance

Students are expected to attend classes, lab hours, and clinical site shifts regularly and **on time**. The policy for attendance is highlighted in each course syllabi.

If a student is unable to attend a lecture, lab, or site shift, he or she must make prior arrangements with the Program Director or the Clinical Coordinator to coordinate make up work. Attendance is recorded in the Clinical Work Experience evaluation.

Program Grade Requirements

Each course syllabi will list the requirements for earning their grade which will include quizzes, exams, laboratories and additional assessments in the course. The number, type and frequency of evaluation tools will vary depending upon the course taught.

Students in the Merritt College Histotechnician Program must maintain a “C” or better in all academic courses and achieve a “pass” in clinical work experience to ensure successful completion of the program. Students with a course grade less than or equal to 69% will not be eligible for a certificate.

Grades are distributed upon the completion of each semester. If classes are not withdrawn or dropped by the respected deadlines, the grade received will be on a student’s permanent record.

The grading breakdown is as follows:

GRADE	DEFINITION	GRADE POINT VALUE
A	90-100 Excellent	4
B	80-89 Good	3
C	70-79 Satisfactory	2
D	60-69 Passing less than satisfactory	1
F	< 59 Failing	0
P	Credit	
NP	No credit	

Work Experience Credit

Students who are already working as histotechnicians or histotechnologists may be eligible for work experience credit. In some cases, this may allow students to bypass certain prerequisite or co-requisite courses. This will be determined by the Biosciences Programs Coordinator/Director and the Histotechnician Program Director. A letter from a current supervisor at the student’s place of employment will be required. However, students should be aware that course content is designed to prepare students for histotechnician careers as well as convey key theory and practice needed in preparation for the ASCP Board of Certification exam.

Advising, Counseling and Grievances

Advising

Advising for the program begins with the counseling office. Additional advising is done by the program director which involves the creation of a plan to complete the required coursework to earn the certificate or meet the student’s educational goals.

Advising for other types of issues or problems is handled by the counseling office.

<https://www.merritt.edu/counseling/>

Counseling

The program assures that appropriate confidentiality and impartiality will be maintained for any meetings which occur with the student and program or college staff members.

For histotechnician academic issues students are encouraged to meet with the program director when issues arise which interfere with the students' progress in the program.

Performance counseling sessions will be held as indicated in situations such as: consistently failing grades on exams, student's failure to meet and keep up with requirements in terms of procedures learned and acceptably performed, etc. The performance session will involve the student, the instructor and the Program Director. The student may be placed on probation and, if the terms of probation are not met, dismissed from the program. All records of performance sessions will be kept confidential.

Merritt College counselors provide academic, career, and personal counseling services to help students identify educational, career, and personal goals. Counselors help students develop their students' educational plans to achieve their goals. Students are encouraged to meet with counselors early in the educational process to plan their program of study. <https://www.merritt.edu/counseling/>

Grievances and Appeals

For grievances within the program, it is important that the student try to resolve the issue with the instructor. If there is no resolution take the issue to the program director.

If there is still no resolution to the student's satisfaction the student is encouraged to follow the "Student Complaint & Grievance Process" <https://www.merritt.edu/student-services/student-complaint-grievance-process/> and may also file an appeal if it is grade related.

Merritt Histotechnician Program Dismissal Policy

Students enrolled in the Histotechnician Certificate of Achievement program of study are responsible for adhering to the policies and regulations established by the Board of Trustees (see College Catalog and the Department of Biology at Merritt College).

The College, in order to maintain standards of student conduct, commensurate with the academic and social level of higher education shall enforce proper student behavior in the classroom, campus grounds and in authorized activities related to the College. Upon recommendation of the President or designee, a student will be disciplined when their attitude, actions, or conduct are detrimental to the College. Disciplinary action will be taken in support of local, state, and federal laws. A professor can remove a student from their class for the day of the removal and the next class meeting. This student is then subject to suspension or expulsion from the College. Refer to the Student Standard of Conduct on suspension.

Clinical Rotation Policies

Clinical Rotation Eligibility

Clinical work experience is crucial to the student's success in the histology profession. Upon completion and passage of all Histotechnician specific courses with a "C" or better, the student is eligible to work on site in a clinical rotation under the supervision of qualified staff.

Students will be placed based on factors such as course performance and instructor recommendations. We will try to accommodate student interests and commute distance needs. The

student must complete 41.5-55.5 units to receive the Histotechnician Certificate of Achievement from Merritt College.

Clinical Placement

The Program Director will assign students to a clinical affiliate based on the following criteria:

- student preference
- geographical distance between the site and the student's residence
- availability of slots at a clinical site
- instructor's discretion and student performance in key coursework
- student's completion of core classes

Students are responsible for finding transportation to and from the clinical sites, and all costs associated with transportation. Although there are multiple schedules available, each site has designated times and days for students. If a student cannot find a suitable site, they may need to adjust their schedule. Students are expected to be flexible with the times and days of work experience. Students may be assigned clinical experiences during evenings, nights, and/or weekends.

Students must be prepared to accept an assignment to any facility being utilized by the program.

Students must have a physical examination completed prior to beginning work experience and are responsible for any fees associated with the physical.

Service Work Policy

Students are permitted to work under the supervision of the clinical rotation site instructor during predetermined shifts. Under no circumstance will the student be allowed to work unsupervised or outside of scheduled shifts. Students are not to perform tasks unrelated to histotechnology, nor are they allowed to take the place of qualified staff during any clinical rotation. After demonstrating proficiency students may, with qualified supervision, be permitted to perform procedures. Students are generally not employees and should not expect any form of compensation for work performed in clinical rotations.

Policy for completing clinical hours when the student is employed by a clinical affiliate.

If a student is hired directly by an institution that is a contracted clinical affiliate with the Merritt Histotechnician Program, the program director may organize the student's clinical assignment through their employer/the affiliate after they've completed all other required histotechnician certificate courses. During the semester the student will be evaluated, they are required to enroll in BIOSC 476G - Occupational Work Experience in Histotechnology. While they are being evaluated by the clinical liaison, they must be officially classified as a student during that observation period. The time of this evaluation will be agreed upon by the clinical liaison and the program director. e.g. 8 hours, 24 hours, etc. and will depend on the student's histotechnician-related experience and input by the student's supervisor and clinical liaison.

Clinical assignment policy for when placement cannot be immediately guaranteed

In the likely event that a student has completed Bioscience 56, Advanced Histotechniques, and there is not a clinical rotation assignment the semester immediately, the student will go onto a waitlist for clinical rotation assignments.

While students are in the program or while students are waiting for a clinical rotation assignment, they are allowed and encouraged to take a full-time or part-time paid histotechnician position directly with a clinical, industry, veterinary, or academic laboratory as a histotechnician or lab technician in a histopathology lab.

If the laboratory the student joins as an employee is a clinical affiliate (has a contract with Merritt College), we may organize the student's clinical assignment through their employer after they've completed all other required histotechnician certificate courses. Once they have completed the clinical assignment through their employer, they can obtain the Histotechnician Certificate of Achievement and take the ASCP exam via Route 1 – Completing a NAACLS Accredited Histotechnician Program.

If a student accepts a position as a Histotechnician in a lab **that is not a clinical affiliate (not contracted with Merritt College)**, the student may be eligible to become certified through Route 2 as defined by the American Society for Clinical Pathology. **Currently, ALL of the Merritt Histotechnician Program students who become HT Certified do so through Route 2.** ASCP Defines Route 2

Eligibility as:

- 60 semester hours (90 quarter hours) of academic credit from a regionally accredited* college/university, with a combination of 12 semester hours (18 quarter hours) in biology and chemistry (must include credit hours in both), OR an associate degree from a regionally accredited* college/university, with a combination of 12 semester hours (18 quarter hours) in biology and chemistry (must include credit hours in both), which may be obtained within, or in addition to, the associate degree,
- AND one year of full time acceptable clinical** experience in a histopathology laboratory within the last five years OR one year of full time acceptable veterinary, industry or research experience in a histopathology laboratory in the U.S. or Canada within the last five years OR completion of a two-part structured histology program of at least nine months that includes both classroom (didactic) training and a minimum of 480 hours of acceptable clinical** experience in a histopathology laboratory within the last five years.

***Regionally Accredited Colleges and Universities**

****Acceptable Clinical Laboratory:** CMS CLIA certificate of registration, compliance, accreditation; **OR** JCI accreditation; **OR** Accreditation under ISO 15189.

To see the explanation of ASCP Routes 1 and 2 please visit [ASCP Eligibility Routes for Histotechnician Page](#).

Dress Code Policy for Rotations

Students are expected to adhere to the dress codes in place at clinical affiliates. Open-toed shoes are not permitted in laboratory settings. For safety reasons, long hair should be pulled back, and jewelry removed during work shifts. Depending on the site, jeans and shorts may not be worn while in the

laboratory. Most laboratory prefer that the student where scrubs.

Background Checks and Drug Testing

Depending on the selected site, a background check and drug test may be required. The student is responsible for covering the cost of fingerprinting and making an appointment with an outside agency to perform the drug test. Some clinical affiliates require students to attend an orientation at their site.

Confidentiality of Patient Information and Results

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires that all patient information and results must be kept confidential and may be reported only to those professionals directly involved with the patient's treatment and care, i.e., they have a "need to know".

Failure to comply may result in probation or, depending upon the level of violation, immediate dismissal from the program.

Current Clinical Rotation Affiliates

- UC Davis Health, Davis, California

Kaiser Permanente/The Permanente Medical Group (TPMG) Kaiser is not a clinical affiliate rather it is an in-house program for Kaiser employees. Kaiser employees take Merritt Histotechnician Program courses before entering Kaiser's program. Students who come from Kaiser and complete Kaiser's program will take their ASCP certification exam through Kaiser, and not through the Merritt Histotechnician Program.

Clinical Student Evaluation

Students will be evaluated based on their performance and conduct while working on site. Students will be graded based on a "pass/no pass" system. Units are not awarded for clinical experience, and the grade has no impact on a student's grade point average.

Students are expected to act in a professional manner. If a student is asked to leave a clinical experience site, the student may jeopardize their chances of securing a slot in another clinical site.

Clinical Grievance Policy

Conflicts or issues with a clinical affiliate can be addressed in the following steps:

1. All issues should be discussed with the Clinical Coordinator immediately. There is no formal, written complaint procedure—verbal accounts of incidents and issues are sufficient.
2. If the Clinical Coordinator and the student are unable to resolve the conflict, the Educational Coordinator will act as a neutral mediator. Again, there is no formal procedure for this step.
3. If the Educational Coordinator is unable to resolve the conflict, the Program Director will step in upon request. At this time, a formal complaint will be lodged with documentation of the grievances. The Program Director will resolve the conflict using Merritt College's student grievance policy.

Student Injury Policy

Students will be subjected to microtomes and other potentially hazardous objects. In the event of an injury sustained on campus or an affiliate site, contact a faculty member immediately. The faculty member will complete the necessary forms and procedure with treatment of the injury according to district policy.

Health Policy

Clinical affiliates require students to present proof of a **current** physical examination on file; additionally, all immunizations must be up to date. The record of the physical examination will be kept in the office of the Educational Coordinator. Students are responsible for the cost of the physical examination and needed immunizations, should they be needed.

Tuition, Fees and Refunds

Visit <https://web.peralta.edu/business/student-financials/fees/> for the most current tuition and fees information.

Visit <https://web.peralta.edu/business/student-financials/refund-drop-deadline-schedules/> for information about obtaining refunds, especially deadlines.

Financial Aid

Financial Aid opportunities are available for qualified students. Please visit <https://www.merritt.edu/financial-aid/> for more information.

Scholarships

Opportunities for scholarships are available at the Merritt College website <https://www.merritt.edu/student-life/student-scholarships/>. Periodically, Bioscience faculty will share scholarship opportunities directly to students.

PROGRAM CLOSURE PLAN

NAACLS requires the program to have a closure plan in case the program unexpectedly closes due to natural or unnatural disasters or permanent closure. Intentional closure of the program, temporary or permanent, will be communicated to all students immediately. In case of disaster the college will inform students of a plan for continuation of their education as soon as that information is available.

Prospective students:

- In the case of permanent program closure students will be informed that the program will not take a new cohort due to program closure.
- In the case of a natural or unnatural disaster the program will work with other laboratory science programs to continue education and training until training can resume at the college.
- Students will be counseled in applying to other local programs.
- Program closure information will be posted on the program website.

Current students:

- Students will be informed of program closure.
- In the case of a natural or unnatural disaster the program will work with other laboratory science programs to continue education and training until training can resume at the college.
- In the event of a mandated permanent closure currently enrolled students will be allowed to complete program.
- The Program Director will be designated to clear students applying for the certification exam.

ASCP Board of Certification Exam

ASCP Histotechnician (HT) Certification Exam Eligibility

Students who complete the HT program are eligible to sit for the HT certification by two different routes. This must be done within five years of completion of training.

Route 1 – successful completion of a NAACLS accredited Histotechnician program by successfully completing the required coursework and a clinical rotation.

- Route 2 – 60 semester hours (90 quarter hours) of academic credit from an accredited (regionally or nationally)* college/university, with a combination of 12 semester hours (18 quarter hours) in biology and chemistry (**must include credit hours in both**), OR an associate degree from an accredited (regionally or nationally)* college/university, with a combination of 12 semester hours (18 quarter hours) in biology and chemistry (**must include credit hours in both**), which may be obtained within, or in addition to, the associate degree,
- AND one year of full time acceptable clinical** experience in a histopathology laboratory within the last five years OR one year of full time acceptable veterinary, industry or research experience in a histopathology laboratory in the U.S. or Canada within the last five years OR completion of a two-part structured histology program of at least nine months that includes both classroom (didactic) training and a minimum of 480 hours of acceptable clinical** experience in a histopathology laboratory within the last five years.

Visit <https://www.ascp.org/content/board-of-certification/get-credentialed> to review the process. You are strongly encouraged to download the “Content Guideline” at the beginning of the program which is an outline of material covered on the exam. Use this as a study guide.

Partnerships with clinical, reference, and research facilities will provide students with the opportunity to obtain work experience to qualify students for the Histotechnician Certificate of Achievement, as well as eligibility for the ASCP certification exam. Graduates may then choose to transfer to universities to complete baccalaureate degrees in related fields.

ASCP Certification Exam Application Fees

The application fee must be submitted with the application form. The current fee for the HT ASCP examination is \$225. This fee is non-refundable.

ASCP Examination Format

The ASCP Histotechnician Examination is an exam made up of 100 multiple-choice questions. The

multiple-choice component uses computer adaptive testing (CAT). The CAT exam is held at NCS Pearson Professional Centers. Two hours and thirty minutes are allowed for the 100 questions. Computer adaptive testing format is based upon the examinee's ability. Initially questions of moderated difficulty are given to the examinee. Each time an examinee answers a question the computer re-estimates the examinee's ability. Then, based upon that estimate, the computer selects questions to challenge the examinee. The advantage to this format is that examinees are not asked questions that are far beyond their ability. The scores are adjusted for level of difficulty. The BOC transforms the scores into scaled scores that can range from 100 to 999.

ASCP HT Examination Grading

A score of 400 is required for passing the ASCP CAT HT exam. At the completion of the exam applicants will submit and be notified immediately whether they have passed or failed. Examination scores will be sent within ten (10) working days after completing the examination. An applicant who successfully complete the examination will receive HT ASCP certification.

ASCP Re-examination

If a student fails the exam, they are permitted to take the HT examination a total of five times. After five unsuccessful attempts a student is ineligible for further examination in the HT category under the same route.

ASCP Credential Maintenance Program

Certified individuals will be required to participate in the BOC Credential Maintenance Program (CMP) to maintain their certification status. The CMP requires 36 hours of documented continuing education units (CEUs) every three years. Information on the CMP is available at the ASCP website.

Documentation Required for Student ASCP HT Certification Exam Eligibility

An official transcript from Merritt College, bearing the embossed seal of the college, the signature of the Registrar and the date your degree was conferred must be submitted to the ASCP BOC. All degree requirements must be completed before you will be able to sit for the examination. The Merritt College Histotechnician Program Director must sign or approve the application. The student has a period of five years from completion of the program to sit the exam. After that period eligibility will be based on clinical laboratory experience.

Passing Certification Exam Not Required for Awarding Degree or Certificate

Issuance of a degree or certificate is not contingent upon the student passing a national certification exam. Graduates are strongly encouraged to become certified as it will increase job opportunities

Graduation

Graduation from the Merritt College Histotechnician Program results in the attainment of the Histotechnician Certificate of Achievement. The Certificate of Achievement is awarded upon the successful completion of all academic coursework listed in the approved program of study. This version of the certificate is taken without BIOSC 476G.

If the student was also able to complete BIOSC 476G and the 240-hour clinical rotation at an approved affiliate site, they will be eligible for the ASCP Exam through Route 1. Once the Program Director has verified a student's successful completion, said student may petition for graduation through Counseling and the Admissions and Records Department.

Merritt Histotechnician Program Faculty

Feather Ives, Histotechnician Program Coordinator

Roma Moore, HTL, Part-time Faculty,

Sarah Hanson, Part-time Faculty

Shirley Pan, HTL, Educational Coordinator

Gisele Giorgi, PhD, Bioscience Programs Director and Microscopy Program Director

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Where do I start?

Histotechnician students start by taking Biosci 101 and then Biosci 102, these are the revised Microscopy Program classes that give students critical histotechnician imaging skills - they have no pre-requisites. If you have very advanced microscopy experience/skills already it is possible to test out of these classes, but this is usually rare.

Are there classes you must take before you start the program?

There are no prerequisites for starting the two Microscopy program classes, but the Histotechnician courses have prerequisites. Please check the catalog and schedule for current course prerequisites.

Are any classes from a previous community college transferable for the program?

Courses from other institutions are simple to transfer in for credit. Once enrolled students can talk with counselors to go about the transfer of units earned from other schools in the US; transfer of credits or units from international schools may also be possible but may vary depending on type of course and school. Courses must be the equivalent of the Merritt program requirements.

How long is the program?

The length of the program will depend on what coursework a student has already accomplished, and active course load at Merritt (e.g., whether Summer courses are also taken); typically, it will be anywhere from 1 to 3 years.

Is this program do-able while also working a full-time job?

Yes, many past and current students have worked full time while also taking the classes. Classes are offered in the evenings and on weekends; there may be some lab sections offered in late afternoons, but usually with a lab section offered in the evening or weekend as an alternative.

Program Cost and Financial Aid?

Go to <https://web.peralta.edu/business/student-financials/fees/> for the most current information about tuition and fees. Students are responsible for purchasing the required textbooks and any additional supplies required by the program.

Histotechnician students who wish to earn an associate degree can qualify for financial aid. There are also scholarships, both needs based and need independent, to apply for, and some students may be eligible for a Board of Governors "BOG" fees waiver. Note other expenses would include books, meals, transportation etc. of course. Talk to a counselor about the financial aid application process once you are enrolled.

Histotechnician Program Student Handbook Signature Page

Printed Name _____

Instructions:

1. Carefully read the Handbook and carefully read each of the statements below.
2. **INITIAL** each statement in the space indicated to signify your agreement to abide by the policies and procedures in this Handbook. If a statement is unclear to you, please discuss it with your lab instructor on the first day of your lab.
3. Print, sign and date in the space below. Submit signature page to the program director via Canvas.

	INITIAL	STATEMENT
1.		I have had an opportunity to carefully review the Histotechnician Student Handbook and have had an opportunity to have my questions answered.
2.		I have read and agree to comply with the student policies and procedures as outlined in the Student Handbook. Furthermore, I will agree to and will comply with the course requirements as listed in each course Syllabus and Student Policies of the Histotechnician program.
3.		I understand that my clinical schedule may require that I travel or perform rotations during non-traditional hours.
4.		I have been informed that the program will create my clinical rotation schedule and I am not allowed to change it.
5.		I have reviewed the Essential Functions and I am able, to the best of my knowledge, to meet them.
6.		I agree to criminal background checks, as needed for employers and clinical sites.
7.		I understand that while performing my regularly assigned duties I may be exposed to blood, body fluids, or tissues. I will use the appropriate personal protective equipment required when there is an inherent potential risk for mucous membrane or skin contact with blood, body fluids or tissues. I understand that I may be subject to disciplinary action if I fail to use personal protective equipment during the performance of my duties.
8.		If my employment was gained through Merritt College, program administrators may send my employer, an “Employer Survey” which allows my employer to evaluate my preparation for an entry level position as a histotechnician. This information will be used solely to improve the program at Merritt College.
9.		I understand the section of the handbook “Clinical assignment policy for when placement cannot be immediately guaranteed.” Page 12.
10.		I understand that I am taking Merritt Bioscience courses voluntarily with no guarantee or promise of employment or clinical rotations. I understand the Merritt Histotechnician Program is job training, career coaching, and networking that may lead to a career change into biomedical research or healthcare with a high employment and promotion success rate.
11.		I understand the majority of students who become certified after completing the courses at Merritt College do so through Route 2 and not through Route 1. Page 12.
12.		I understand there are 2 versions of the Certificate of Achievement. Version one does not include the BIOSC 476G clinical rotation. Version 2 includes BIOSC 476G, the clinical rotation. It is only with Version 2 that I am eligible for Route 1 to the HT exam.

Signature _____ Date _____