



Specialist in Blood Banking Technology/Transfusion Medicine
(LifeSouth SBB) Education Program

Student Handbook

Version 1.5

Education Coordinator
Bill Martinez

Program Director
Christopher Lough, M.D.

Not Under Document Control if Printed

**Welcome to the LifeSouth Blood Center Specialist in Blood Bank Technology / Transfusion
Medicine (LifeSouth SBB) Education Program**

Thank you for choosing our program. LifeSouth Community Blood Centers, Inc. (LifeSouth) wants to provide with you with the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills that will enhance your personal and professional growth.

This Student Handbook provides answers to common questions about the LifeSouth SBB Program by describing policies and procedures and your responsibilities to LifeSouth as a participant. If anything is unclear, please discuss the matter with the LifeSouth Education Coordinator.

You are responsible for reading and understanding this Student Handbook.

From time to time, the information included in the Student Handbook may change. Significant changes may be communicated to you via e-mail.

Not Under Document Control if Printed

I. Introduction

The policies and procedures described in this Student Handbook (“Handbook”) apply to all students of the LifeSouth SBB Program.

Important things to keep in mind about this Handbook:

- The Handbook may not address all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the policies and procedures described herein. For that reason, if you have any questions, you should address your specific questions with the LifeSouth SBB Education Coordinator or Program Director.
- This Handbook and the information in it should be treated as proprietary and confidential. No portion of this Handbook should be disclosed to others, except LifeSouth SBB Program students and others affiliated with LifeSouth whose knowledge of the information is required in the normal course of the program.

II. LifeSouth Blood Center

LifeSouth Community Blood Centers is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving our customers with a safe blood supply and a variety of lifesaving services. Our mission is to provide a safe blood supply that meets or exceeds the needs in each community we serve, and to provide a variety of services in support of ongoing and emerging blood and transfusion-related activities.

Our state-of-the-art laboratories include an AABB IRL-accredited reference laboratory, a donor testing laboratory serving over one million donors per year, a CAP-accredited HLA laboratory, a quality control laboratory, and a molecular laboratory. With more than 30 donor centers, 45 blood mobiles, and 2,000 blood drives a month, our LifeSouth team serves more than 100 hospitals in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia by providing the highest quality blood components and services.

III. Details about the LifeSouth SBB Program

The LifeSouth SBB Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (www.caahep.org) upon the recommendation of the Committee of Accreditation for Specialist in Blood Bank Technology Schools (CoA-SBBT). This program aims to provide you with a comprehensive educational curriculum in transfusion medicine.

The LifeSouth SBB Program is an independent distance learning program. Students will access online lectures and exams using online content hosted by the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB). The clinical experiences and rotations required will be completed at designated facilities or coordinated through LifeSouth.

The LifeSouth SBB Program provides in-depth training in all aspects of blood banking, including:

- Blood procurement and product manufacturing
- Transfusion medicine practice
- Immunohematology and specialized laboratory testing
- Quality systems and process control
- Education and management.

At the completion of the 12-month LifeSouth SBB Program, the successful student will receive a certificate of completion and will be eligible to sit for the SBB examination given by the American Society of Clinical Pathologists (ASCP).

Note: *The Master of Science in Transfusion Medicine degree program can be combined with the UTMB SBB Certificate Program through completion of an additional three (3) semesters prior to beginning the Master of Science in Transfusion Medicine. After completion of the certificate program, the student must challenge and pass the SBB (ASCP) exam to continue with the MSTM degree program. For additional information refer to <https://www.utmb.edu/shp/clls/mstm/academics>.*

LifeSouth SBB Program Goals

1. Provide an engaging educational experience which enhances the knowledge base and skills of students with the goal of personal and professional development, as well as preparation to pass the SBB accreditation exam.
2. To utilize feedback from our students and communities of interest to update and improve our services.

The LifeSouth SBB Program Minimum Expectation Statement

Our mission is to develop competent entry-level Specialists in Blood Bank Technology/Transfusion Medicine (SBBT/TM) in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains that will enable them to provide a variety of services in support of ongoing and emerging blood and transfusion-related activities.

Admission Requirements

1. Have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university in medical laboratory science, biology, or a related science.
2. Have a minimum of three full years post-baccalaureate work experience relevant to an immunohematology area within an institution accredited by a recognized accrediting agency, or two years of full-time employment as a Medical Technologist in a qualified Immunohematology reference lab.
3. Complete an application for admission, including transcripts of undergraduate and graduate coursework from all institutions attended.
4. Have a minimum grade point average of 2.75 (on a scale of 4.0).
5. Identify a mentor (preferably SBB or MD) who is willing to assist with answering questions, locating facilities for the required clinical experience and to monitoring student progress through the SBB training.
6. Submit two letters of recommendation.

LifeSouth SBB Program Review Student File/Record

Keeping student files up to date is the responsibility of the LifeSouth SBB Education Coordinator. The student file contains at a minimum:

- Student Application
- Completion certificate or record of incomplete participation
- Student's email address

You may view your own student file, and you may request and receive a copy of the LifeSouth SBB Program's documents you have signed. Contact the LifeSouth SBB Education Coordinator to request copies of documents from your student file.

Open-Door Policy of the LifeSouth SBB Program

Our goal at LifeSouth is to provide a pleasant and welcoming educational environment for all students. We want to develop and maintain a cooperative relationship among students based on mutual respect and understanding. We believe that students' opinions, thoughts, and feedback are important, and we recognize the need for procedures that will allow students to voice their questions, suggestions, and concerns. We have an open-door policy for students to be able to share their concerns with the LifeSouth SBB Education Coordinator.

The LifeSouth SBB Program open-door policy is in effect during each working day. If at any time students are not comfortable speaking directly with the LifeSouth SBB Education Coordinator, they may contact the LifeSouth SBB Program Director for assistance.

LifeSouth SBB Program Student Safety/cGMP Training Policy

Due to the various rotations that are required during the program, it is important for the LifeSouth SBB Program student to have documented safety training. This training is available for the LifeSouth SBB Program student at LifeSouth and will be completed during orientation week.

The LifeSouth cGMP Training Classes will be made available to the students to review safety, cGMP, and health issues. If a student does not attend the LifeSouth cGMP Training Classes, they must submit documentation of annual safety training to the LifeSouth SBB Program officials. Documentation of safety training will be kept in the student's file. This documentation will be retained in the student record until the student's completion of the program.

IV. Summary of Student Expectations: Orientation and Attendance

All LifeSouth SBB Program students are required to participate in a program orientation at the student's expense. This orientation is held at LifeSouth Corporate offices located in Gainesville, FL. The orientation may be held remotely when necessary to accommodate extraordinary circumstances (exceptions need approval by the LifeSouth SBB Program Director).

Rotation Attendance

Regular and prompt attendance is essential for all LifeSouth SBB Program students. Supervised clinical practice sites must meet current acceptable performance standards at the discretion of the LS SBB Medical Director. You are required to complete rotations; however, there are no specific attendance requirements for these self-directed rotations. It is the program's expectation that you will have regular and prompt attendance with all established rotation sites and complete these activities during the 12-month program.

Exceptions for required LifeSouth SBB Program Tasks (Exams, Rotations and Professional Development Tasks)

Exams, clinical rotations, and professional development tasks are outlined with deadlines at the beginning of each class. If you need to apply for an extension of a deadline or an exception to a task, please contact the LifeSouth SBB Education Coordinator as soon as possible. These exceptions must be "pre-approved" by the LifeSouth SBB Education Coordinator for a student to be excused and to re-schedule required tasks:

Jury Duty for the LifeSouth SBB Program Student:

It is your civic duty to report for jury duty whenever called. LifeSouth students shall be granted

excused time off for mandatory jury duty and for court hearings in which they are a plaintiff or defendant. A leave of absence for jury duty shall be granted to any student who has been notified to serve. Upon receipt of the notice to serve jury duty, the student shall immediately notify the LifeSouth SBB Education Coordinator. A copy of the notice to serve jury duty shall be submitted to the LifeSouth SBB Education Coordinator.

Military Leave of Absence Policy for the LifeSouth SBB Program Student:

LifeSouth encourages students to serve their country by participating in the uniformed services. A student who is a member of the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, National Guard or Reserves shall be granted a leave of absence for military service, training, or related obligations in accordance with applicable law. At the conclusion of the leave, under the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), a student generally has a right to return to the same position they held prior to the leave.

Assignments/Practicums

The online education system is used to document practicums, professional development tasks, and other assignments that may be required. At the end of the 12 months, the Education Coordinator will perform a final assignment review:

- If the assignment review is acceptable, then the student meets this requirement for the completion of the program.
- If the assignment review is not acceptable, then the student fails to meet this requirement for the completion of the program.
- There are 16 required practicums, and two that are optional. Checklists, memos of understanding (MOUs), and evaluations must be completed and submitted as applicable for completion of the program.
- All required assignments must be completed in a satisfactory manner in order to be eligible for the program certificate

V. Exams

Exams will be scheduled every two to four weeks from the beginning of the program. The exams consist of required online exams in addition to mid-term and final exams. Exams are typically open for a period of nine days.

Exams not completed by the due date will be assessed a 15% penalty unless prior arrangements have been made and approved by the LifeSouth SBB Education Coordinator and/or Program Director.

Minimum Expectation for Exam Completion

The LifeSouth SBB Program student is required to complete all exams and quizzes, including the mid-term and final, by the posted due date. If an individual fails to complete an exam, no credit will be given for the exam.

Exceptions may be applied on a case-by-case basis with the approval of the LifeSouth SBB Education Coordinator's permission.

Minimum Grading Expectation

To successfully complete the LifeSouth SBB program, the student must maintain the following:

Not Under Document Control if Printed

LifeSouth SBB Education Program: Student Handbook

1. An average of 75% or higher on all module exams. Module exam grades will be calculated as an equally weighted average of the exams for each course.
2. Achieve scores of $\geq 75\%$ for the following:
 - 5261 Final Exams
 - Midterm Exam
 - Final Exam

Refer to [LifeSouth SBB Program Grading Policy: Written Examinations](#) section in this handbook for additional grading information.

VI. Expectations for Rotations

Dress Code/Personal Appearance Policy

LifeSouth considers it very important that you are well groomed, neat, and dressed appropriately for your job function and the work environment.

Safety and Confidentiality Requirements

Students are expected to follow the safety and confidentiality requirements of the facilities hosting their rotations.

Minimum Expectation

LifeSouth SBB Program students must complete clinical, technical, and administrative rotations as assigned. Students are also required to complete a minimum of 80% of the tasks on each rotation checklist and 100% of each assigned study guide. Completion of clinical, technical, and administrative rotations requires that students perform the following:

1. Appropriately signed LifeSouth SBB Memo of Understanding. This document is to be signed by the person or persons responsible for the student's rotation. The student must upload this to the online education system (Blackboard Assignments tab).
2. Upload the appropriate LifeSouth SBB Student Rotation Checklist for the rotation. The checklist must have been completed by the individual(s) responsible for having reviewed its contents with the student. The student is responsible for uploading the completed checklist.
3. Complete the Rotation Study Guides for each rotation checklist as indicated.
4. Complete Clinical Rotation Evaluation form.

VII. LifeSouth SBB Professional Development Tasks

In addition to the lecture/exam and rotation responsibilities, each student is required to complete tasks related to professional development. The purpose of this expectation is to broaden the experience, understanding, and appreciation of transfusion medicine by the student.

Students must submit a summary of the completed professional development task to the Education Coordinator via the Assignments tab in Blackboard.

Homework

Homework Assignments (from Blackboard) – Completion of homework assignments is strongly recommended to help reinforce the material, but not mandatory for completion of the program.

VIII. LifeSouth SBB Program Grading Policy: Written Examinations

Students must take the exams online within the scheduled time. The instructor will inform the students in advance of the exam schedule. The LifeSouth SBB Program student must maintain an average of $\geq 75\%$ for all module exams.

- For any exam score $< 75\%$, students must review all missed exam questions. The student must provide the correct answer as well as the source for the material used.
- Students not maintaining a $\geq 75\%$ exam average will be counseled, and the counseling sessions documented. Any student maintaining $< 75\%$ exam average after exam five may be removed from the program.
- A student must achieve a minimum grade of 75% on the midterm and final written exams.
- For those interested in applying to the UTMB Masters in Transfusion Medicine Program, a minimum exam average of 80% is required.
- A student below the passing criteria for the midterm or final written exams will be allowed to take a second exam on the same material after coaching and reviewing the exam with the LifeSouth SBB Education Coordinator.
- The repeat final exam will be as comprehensive as the initial final exam but will contain different test questions. If a student fails both written exams and does not take the repeat exam with a successful result, they will not complete the LifeSouth SBB Program.

IX. Student Grade Appeal

Academic Appeal Process

The student has the right to prove to the LifeSouth SBB Education Coordinator that a question on a written exam was marked incorrectly. The student must show written evidence on which they based their conclusions. If this does not give the student satisfaction, they can discuss the question with the lecturer of that material. If the lecturer agrees that the question was marked incorrectly, the Education Coordinator will change the mark.

Students may request recalculation of their grade to the SBB Education Coordinator. They may also ask for their grade to be reviewed by SBB Education faculty. The findings of LifeSouth SBB Education faculty will be final.

Filing a Grievance

If a student is encountering personnel, safety related, quality concerns or deems an evaluation as unfair or discriminatory, the issue/complaint is to be documented in writing. The [Student Statement](#) form is recommended to document the grievance or appeal. To prevent misunderstanding and avoid confusion, all official communications and appeals must be submitted in writing with signature and directed to the LifeSouth SBB Program Director.

The issue/complaint will be reviewed by the program leadership and a written response will be

completed and reviewed with the student within a reasonable amount of time. Students may also submit a complaint directly to CAAHEP using the following link:

<https://www.caahep.org/Students/Complaint-Policy/File-a-Complaint.aspx>

X. LifeSouth SBB Program Student Withdrawal or Dismissal Process

Student Withdrawal or Dismissal

A student may be terminated by: Self-withdrawal (or) dismissal.

Causes for Dismissal

- Failure to maintain $\geq 75\%$ on examinations.
- Failure to regularly attend meetings, and/ or failure to participate in an acceptable manner as determined by the Education Coordinator. Students should attend all regularly scheduled class meetings. Failure to attend at least 80% of scheduled meetings will be considered unacceptable. Unexcused absences will not be tolerated.
- Failure to meet deadlines for payment of LifeSouth SBB Program.
- Failure to follow the procedures or policies that the student signed and agreed to at the outset of the LifeSouth SBB Program.
- Failure to complete required assignments in a timely manner.

Method of Removal/Dismissal

- The student will be counseled.
- If, after documented counseling, there is no improvement in performance or participation, the student may be dismissed from the LifeSouth SBB Program.

Results of Dismissal from the LifeSouth SBB Program

- Removal of access to the on-line portion of the LifeSouth SBB Program.
- Removal of access to the LifeSouth Blood Centers facility.
- Certificate of completion will not be granted.

Appeals Process

Students may submit in writing the reasons why they believe they should not be dismissed to the LifeSouth SBB Medical Director and LifeSouth SBB Program Director.

XI. Participant Work Policy

As a distance program, we do not have jurisdiction over you at your workplace. However, time at LifeSouth is to be committed to program tasks and objectives; it is not to be used to perform patient care.

You should speak with your supervisor/manager before the program begins about the possibilities for time off and/or switching work hours in order to fulfill the rotation requirements. You are informed of the amount of work required BEFORE the program starts to allow you to plan ahead. All course information is given online so it is possible to work full- time and plan to complete the course requirements on your own time outside of work.

If the program becomes too much work, you can take a Leave of Absence. The Leave of Absence means you will quit taking exams and come back at the beginning of the next program year.

XII. LifeSouth SBB Program Financial Summary

Two types of LifeSouth SBB Program Students

1. External Students that are not employed by LifeSouth
2. Internal Students that are employed by LifeSouth. (See LifeSouth SBB Program HR Policy)

Fees for Internal and External Students = \$6,000 per year

Terms are subject to the LifeSouth Tuition Assistance Agreement

Collection of Fees for External Students

- External Students will be invoiced by LifeSouth's Accounting Department
- All funds collected will be submitted to LifeSouth's Accounting Department as collected via check, credit card or money order.

Payment Plan for External Students

- \$ 3,000 Due prior to orientation.
- \$ 3,000 Due the second Friday of November of the program year.

Consequence of Non-payment

1. If the student does not pay the initial fee prior to the due date:
 - They will be dropped from the program.
 - There is no allowance for late payment.
2. If the student does not pay the second installment:
 - They will be dropped from the program.
 - The password for the student will be changed so that they will not have access to the program.
3. If the student pays the second installment within ten (10) days after the due date:
 - They will be given the new password and be allowed to re-join the program.

Refund Policy

No refunds will be given.

XIII. Receipt & Acknowledgment of LifeSouth SBB Program Student Handbook

This Student Handbook is an important document intended to help you become acquainted with the LifeSouth SBB Program. This Handbook will serve as a guide, but it is not the final word in all cases. Individual circumstances may call for individual attention.

Version History

#	Significant Changes	Approved by	Approved	Implemented
1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarified the conditions under which student counseling and dismissal from the program can/will occur. Updated pricing information and deadlines to match current practices. 	Phuc Huynh, Corporate Quality Assurance Coordinator III	09 Nov 2023	09 Nov 2023
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjusted the minimum grade required for the midterm and final written exams to 75%; previously 80%. Adjusted the score requirements for the 5261 final exams, midterm exam, and final exam to 75% or higher for each; previously a 75% or higher average was required. 	Phuc Huynh, Corporate Quality Assurance Coordinator III	30 Oct 2023	30 Oct 2023
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjusted the average score required for the 5261 final exams, midterm exam, and final exam to 75%; previously 80%. Removed the Research Project section; this is no longer required. 	Phuc Huynh, Corporate Quality Assurance Coordinator III	23 Aug 2023	23 Aug 2023
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor revisions to formatting. Minor revisions to wording for clarification. 	Phuc Huynh, Corporate Quality Assurance Coordinator	03 Nov 2021	03 Nov 2021
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Assignments/Practicums section, Exams section, and Homework section after CAAHEP inspection. Made additional minor changes 	Phuc Huynh, Corporate Quality Assurance Coordinator	19 Jul 2021	19 Jul 2021
1.0	New handbook.	Dr. Juan Merayo-Rodriguez, Medical Director Dr. Chris Lough, VP of Medical Services Lori Masingil, VP of Quality	02 Jul 2021	02 Jul 2021