

CALIFORNIA CERTIFIED PUBLIC HEALTH MICROBIOLOGISTS

California Certified Public Health Microbiologists (PHMs) are professional laboratorians who specialize in detecting, isolating, and identifying the microorganisms (bacteria, fungi, viruses, rickettsia and parasites) and their products that are associated with infectious and communicable diseases. In a public health laboratory, PHMs perform analyses on specimens from humans, as well as from water supplies, food, milk, and the environment. They provide laboratory support for the surveillance and control and prevention of communicable diseases and other health hazards in the community.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME A PUBLIC HEALTH MICROBIOLOGIST?

Academic requirements include a Bachelor or higher degree in medical or public health microbiology from an accredited college or university. A Bachelor degree in a biological, chemical, physical or laboratory science may be considered equivalent if the transcript shows completion of 24 semester units (or equivalent quarter units) from the following areas: microbiology, cellular or molecular biology, chemistry, biochemistry, genetics, physics, microtechnique, instrumentation, epidemiology, or other related courses. *The 24 units must include a minimum of 6 semester units in a microbiology, molecular microbiology, or bacteriology course that includes instruction in the causative organisms, principles and practices of infectious disease, and infection control.* A course in medical microbiology or pathogenic bacteriology would provide this instruction although such topics may be included within another course.

- a. Courses in microbiology (bacteriology, mycology, parasitology, virology, immunology, and serology) should include a laboratory component.
- b. Related courses which may be acceptable to the Department include: Bacterial or Microbial Physiology, Bacterial Diversity, Bacterial Pathogenesis, Bacteriology, Mycology, Parasitology, Virology, Genetics, Microbial Genetics, Immunogenetics, Cell Biology, Molecular Biology, Immunology, Cellular Immunology, Food Microbiology, Public Health Microbiology, Recombinant DNA Microbiology, Epidemiology, Infectious Diseases, Statistics, Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Bioinformatics, Biotechnology, Biosystemics, Microscopy, Electron Microscopy, Tissue Culture, Laboratory Techniques, Laboratory Mathematics, Environmental Microbiology, Soil Microbiology, Hematology, Immunohematology.

Training requirements include 6 months training in an approved State or local Public Health laboratory or equivalent experience. An approved training program consists of didactic and practical instruction covering the body of knowledge of public health laboratory science. Approval to train must be obtained from Laboratory Field Services before beginning training in the State or Local Public Health Laboratories. Experience used to satisfy the requirement for training must be verified for equivalency by the Department.

Examination requirements are successful completion the training program and obtaining a passing score on the California Public Health Microbiologist Certification Examination. The certification examination is criterion referenced.

Applications for approval to train or for admission to the certification examination may be obtained from:

California State Department of Health Services
Laboratory Field Services – Public Health Laboratory Program
850 Marina Bay Parkway Bldg P 1st Floor, Richmond, CA 94804–6403
(510) 620–3838, kathy.williams@cdph.ca.gov or (510) 231–7836, genie.tang@cdph.ca.gov