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## CLINICAL MEDICAL ASSISTANT

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### 1. What is the Clinical Medical Assistant (CMA) Program?

The CMA Program is a Certificate Program and is designed to prepare the student for a successful medical assisting career and employment in the healthcare field, facilitate personal growth experience, and provide Associate Degree opportunities.

#### 2. Who is the supervisor of the CMA program?

Robyn Tarpley is the Director of Health and Medical Services programs. She can answer any questions you may have at [Robyn.Tarpley@pit.edu](mailto:Robyn.Tarpley@pit.edu)

#### 3. Is the CMA Program approved?

Yes. The National Healthcare Association approves the program.

#### 4. What is the job outlook and salary of a medical assistant?

Most Medical Assistants work in physicians' offices, health care centers, or clinics. There are also many job opportunities in hospitals, medical laboratories, and long-term care facilities. There is a 19% projected job growth 2019-2029.

The median income for a Medical assistant is \$35,000. Salary will vary based on the type of facility (Hospital vs. Physicians' s Office vs. Long term Care Facility).

Medical Assisting is a stable job in a high-demand industry. You can either launch your career as a medical assistant or use it as a stepping stone to future opportunities in the healthcare field.

#### 5. Do I need to take a Certification Exam?

Medical assistants need to pass the **Certified Medical Assistant Exam** sponsored by the National Healthcareer Association. This license proves you are a professional in your

field, which builds confidence and credibility. You will also be working with other licensed professionals, so everyone around you has the same knowledge base.

## 6. What is the long-term outlook for this field?

When you're a medical assistant, you're in demand. This occupation is growing much faster than almost any other career field. As baby boomers get older, they need more preventive medical services. That is approximately 76.4 million people or nearly one-third of the U.S. population — and almost all of them will be involved in the healthcare system. That is significant demand.

## 7. Will criminal history prevent acceptance into the program?

It depends on the specific details of the criminal history. One misdemeanor may not prevent working in the healthcare field. At the same time, more than one and/or a felony conviction usually does.

If there is an "arrest" or "charge" listed on your criminal background. In that case, you will be required to provide official documents such as criminal background check from that state.

*\*The term "convicted" includes a judgment, found guilty by a judge or jury, pleaded guilty or nolo contendere, received probation without verdict, disposition instead of a trial, or Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition.*

***If you are in the above situation, you may have difficulty obtaining employment as a Medical Assistant.***

Deceit in the admission process is a cause for dismissal from the program.

## 8. When do I need to submit my healthcare paperwork? What happens if I do not submit on time?

To ensure the smooth completion of the medical assisting program and externship, please deliver a copy of the required clearances and documentation to the Externship instructor by the end of the first term.

Students who have not submitted all of their required documentation by the end of their second term will be withdrawn from the program. To move on to externship, students must fulfill this requirement.

For students who cannot submit this information, an alternative class can be offered, reinforcing their healthcare knowledge in a simulation setting. However, please note that Medical Assistants must supply this documentation when seeking employment in a healthcare environment.

**9. How many credits are the program, and how long will it take to complete the program? Will I earn a degree?**

The curriculum is comprised of 27 Medical Assisting credits. The curriculum is divided into three terms of instruction for a total of approximately 36 weeks of education. The full-time day curriculum is a nine (9) month program.

Students interested in earning an Associate Degree can apply the CMA credits to the Allied Health Associate Degree. Students can complete both the CMA classes and the Associate Degree classes in approximately two years.

**10. What are the roles and responsibilities of a medical assistant?**

Medical assistants are often employed at doctor's offices, where they are responsible for these healthcare activities:

- Checking patients in and out upon arrival and departure
- Answering phone calls and questions
- Preparing patients for examination by taking medical histories and collecting vital signs
- Administering injections or medications as directed by a physician
- Working with electronic health records (EHR)
- Collecting and preparing laboratory specimens
- Performing basic laboratory tests
- Instructing patients about medication and special diets
- Transmitting prescription refills as directed
- Drawing blood
- Conducting electrocardiograms
- Removing sutures and changing dressings

Medical assistants are instrumental in helping patients feel at ease in the physician's office and often explain the physician's instructions. Medical Assistants are also employed in long-term care facilities as well as ambulatory surgical centers.

**11. What is included in my tuition?**

Student tuition covers many of the expenses related to attending school. Your tuition includes

- Textbooks
- Online activities for virtual learning and simulations
- CPR Training and Certification
- PIT Lab Coat

- Blood pressure cuff and stethoscope
- One certification exam

Students are responsible for purchasing their own scrubs and the cost of healthcare-based documents, such as a titer exam.

#### **12. Is tutoring available?**

PIT is organized for student success. PIT provides peer, private, and group tutoring in our Student Resource Center. Additionally, Medical Assisting instructors are available for academic advising, tutoring, guidance, and students' support.

#### **13. What types of student services are available on campus?**

Student Services provides academic support and career and transfer counseling and referral to social and community services. Other student services available include the cafeteria, student lounge, and student lockers. P. I. T. van service between PIT and SEPTA's 101 Trolley Station at Providence Road and State Road is available.

PIT also offers a full-service library providing both on-campus and virtual assistance. The librarian works directly with students to find research materials, verify online resources, and avoid plagiarism.

#### **14. Will I receive a certification immediately upon completion of the CMA program?**

No. Graduation from the CMA program qualifies you to sit for the certification exam through the National Healthcareer Associate (NHA). The College will pay for your certification exam if you sit for the exam within one year of completion.

Suppose you have not taken your certification exam within five (5) years of completing the program. In that case, you will no longer be eligible to sit for the certification exam through the NHA.

#### **15. What sites are used for externship experiences?**

Externship sites include doctors affiliated with Penn Medicine and Crozier Chester Hospital and many private practice facilities. Clinical sites are not limited to Delaware County and may be out of state.

**16. Can I request a specific medical office for my externship?**

The program director and the faculty decide clinical site placement. Requests for clinical site placement are not guaranteed.

**17. Is transportation provided to and from the clinical sites?**

Students are responsible for their own transportation.

**18. What type of patients do students care for during externship experiences?**

Each student will be assigned to (and expected to) care for men, women, and children with various health problems. Students are not permitted to refuse a patient care assignment.

**19. What resources are available to help fund my education?**

Financial aid is available for those students who qualify through federal, state, institutional, and special programs. Student loans are available. Some employers offer tuition forgiveness (repay outstanding loans for education) programs in exchange for employment. There are also professional and community organizations that provide scholarships to students. For further information on federal, state, or college aid, go to [www.fasfa.gov](http://www.fasfa.gov). P. I. T. Students who need assistance should contact their representatives from the Financial Aid Office to help students apply for financial aid.