

**Medical Assisting Program
Curriculum Revision**

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I. Abstract

The Medical Assisting (MA) Program revision will ensure that the curriculum continues to meet the needs of employers in the health care delivery system and maintain compliance with the Medical Assisting Education Review Board (MAERB) of the American Association of Medical Assistants' Endowment (AAMAE) *Standards*. To research and develop the proposed changes in this revision, close communication with clinical site supervisors and advisory committee members has been maintained; professional conferences have been attended; outcome data from graduates, students, and employers has been collected and changes in workforce demands have been responded to. The MA Program will be revised to reflect a decrease in the number of credits to graduate from 67 to 64.

The major proposed changes include the following:

- Write one new course: *AH 201 – CPT and ICD Coding* that will replace *AH 200 – Basic CPT Coding*. This is being done to ensure students will have an understanding of both coding systems used in the ambulatory care environment and be able to apply their skills through simulation activities in the classroom. This course will be a four-credit class. (increase of 1 credit)
- Add *AH 101 – Introduction to Health Care Professions* to the curriculum. Upon completion of this course, students will have a better understanding of the various health care professions available to them gain greater insight as to the role and responsibilities of medical assistants in the health care system.
- Delete *MA 250 – Medical Office Laboratory Procedures* and incorporate its content into MA 110 and MA 115. (decrease of 3 credits)
- Replace BIOL 109 and BIOL 110 with a new course, *BIOL 108, Essentials of Anatomy and Physiology*, as an option for students who are interested in seeking employment immediately after graduation. This course has a focus specifically geared towards health care workers. For students who are interested in pursuing an advanced degree, they will be advised to take the BIOL 109-110 sequence. (decrease of 4 credits)
- Prerequisites will be added to *MA 115 – Medications and Medical Specialty Procedures* to ensure students have the foundational knowledge needed to be successful in this course. The current prerequisites for MA 115 are ENGL 101 and BIOL 109. In the future the new prerequisites will be ENGL 101, BIOL 108, AH 103 and MA 110.

II. Overview of the Existing Program

A. Purpose

The MA Program graduated its first class in 1976. The Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) based on the recommendation of the Medical Assisting Education Review Board of the American Association of Medical Assistants' Endowment (AAMAE). The Program underwent an accreditation site visit in February 2004 with no deficiencies cited; this has resulted in the maximum period of continuing

accreditation being granted, with the next on-site visit in 2014.

The medical assistant has been and always will be one of health care's most multi-skilled professionals. The skills fall into three major areas: administrative/financial, clinical and laboratory.

The medical assistant performs administrative functions that include computer operations; answering and screening telephone calls; scheduling appointments for patients in the office and making arrangements for patients to obtain specialty procedures and services at ancillary facilities; managing the medical records system; and making managed care referrals.

Specific financial responsibilities performed by the medical assistant are bookkeeping; accounting; performing banking and collection procedures; managing accounts payable and receivable; and submitting third party claims to insurance companies using procedural and diagnostic coding.

The medical assistant adheres to safety and infection control practices and procedures; performs diagnostic tests that include vital signs, electrocardiograms, and pulmonary function tests; and does visual acuity and auditory assessment. Other areas of responsibility are to obtain patient medical histories; prepare and administer medications; prepare patients for examinations, procedures, and treatments; and assist the physician during specialty examinations and procedures.

In the laboratory setting, the medical assistant performs specimen collection and processing, and performs venipuncture and capillary punctures for diagnostic testing using point-of-care technology. Hematology and chemistry testing procedures include: hemoglobin; hematocrit; erythrocyte sedimentation rate; blood glucose; and cholesterol. Immunology testing procedures include infectious mononucleosis and rheumatoid arthritis. The physical, chemical and microscopic examination of urine and microbiology testing for streptococcal infections are also performed.

Given the multitude of skills of the medical assistant, Program core courses are designed to address the many administrative, clinical, and laboratory components of working in a medical office. Other areas of study incorporated into the curriculum are professionalism, medical law, ethics, patient education and instruction, and interpersonal communication.

The diversity of the curriculum provides graduates with the ability to work in a variety of employment settings such as insurance companies, clinics, hospitals, and physicians' offices. Program graduates are predominantly employed in physicians' offices, hospitals, and ambulatory care clinics. Most graduates remain in the Philadelphia area and are found at many levels of the health care delivery system, employed as medical office managers, medical assistants, medical receptionists, patient service representatives and patient care technicians.

The MA Program follows an orderly sequenced curriculum in which information is first presented in lecture format. This is then followed by the practical application of the material in the student laboratory. In the clinical courses of the Program students are assigned to a clinical

facility to learn and enhance the needed skills. The sequence of the MA curriculum follows a gradual progression from foundational medical assisting skills to more advanced techniques. There are two clinical experiences to which the students are assigned while in the Program, *CLT 102 – Phlebotomy* and *MA 299 – Medical Assisting Externship*.

Nationally, medical assistants have ranked in the top ten fastest growing occupations over the past two decades. The Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook indicates that change in employment in medical assisting is projected to “grow much faster than average, ranking medical assistants among the fastest growing occupations over the 2008-2018 decade. Job opportunities are excellent with an expected growth in employment of 34% from 2008-2018. The annual mean wage in Pennsylvania for medical assistants is \$29,240 and in Philadelphia, the mean salary is \$31,850 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Most MA Program graduates secure employment prior to graduation or shortly thereafter. Based on employment projections from the Delaware Valley Life Science Workforce, medical assistants will continue to be in demand to meet the needs of physicians in the community.

Program graduates also sit for the national certification examination given by the American Association of Medical Assistants. Upon successful completion of this exam, graduates are awarded the Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) (AAMA) credential. Program pass rates for the past three cycles among graduates who have taken the exam have been 100%, compared with the national average pass rate of 67%.

B. Current Program Requirements

Applicants for the Program must have a high school diploma or its equivalent. High school biology or its acceptable equivalent within the past 10 years, with a grade of C or better is required. All applicants for admission are required to take the College's placement tests. Students needing developmental course work must satisfactorily complete the appropriate English and math courses before starting the degree Program.

To remain in the Program, students must receive a grade of C or better in each core course and in each required pre- and corequisite courses.

To qualify for graduation as a medical assistant, a student must complete 67 credit hours as prescribed, attain a grade-point-average of 2.0 and receive a grade of C or better in each core course and in each required pre- and corequisite course.

C. Previous Program Revision

The MA Program underwent a revision in 2006. Reasons for the proposed changes in the last revision included: technological changes in health care; implementation of HIPAA regulations; the increase in scope of practice for medical assistants; additions to course content to meet accreditation *Standards* and to prepare graduates to enter the workforce.

III. Description of the Proposed Revision

Rationale

The major reasons for the proposed revision are to increase students' understanding of the roles and responsibilities medical assistants have in a health care environment, improve student retention in the Program, and streamline the curriculum to ensure course content is structured to reflect the introduction, assimilation, and application of material as students progress through the Program. These changes will also enhance recruitment efforts by providing students with an opportunity to finish the degree and sit for the certification exam a semester earlier.

With the addition of the Health Services Management and Patient Service Representative Programs, many students who initially applied to and were accepted into the MA Program, changed their major to a Program that was geared towards more administrative employment. For the past three years, the MA Program has not met the accreditation benchmark in retention due to students opting for the other administrative Programs. By adding *AH 101 – Introduction to Health Care Professions* to the Program, students will have a better understanding of the medical assistants' role in the health care delivery system.

In the past year, there was an increase in students applying to and being accepted into the MA Program. This revision proposes to provide an avenue for students to begin the Program in the second summer semester and complete all Program requirements by the end of the second Fall semester, provided students adhere to the proposed schedule. Often, students who enroll in the MA Program are interested in ultimately pursuing a nursing degree. The MA Program will be viewed as a natural progression for these students as they will acquire some of the clinical skills that nurses are required to perform and gain experience through participating in two clinical externships.

Beginning salaries for medical assistants are lower in comparison to the initial salaries that can be earned by other allied health and nursing Program graduates at the College. It is believed that by offering students a more concentrated approach to completing the Program, more students will be attracted to, and complete, the revised Program.

Members of the MA Advisory Committee unanimously agreed that a medical assisting graduate with an Associate's degree and the credential will be valued more than one without the degree. By shortening the Program students will be eligible to sit for the certification exam at the completion of the MA 299 Medical Assisting Externship course. Hence this could provide them with the opportunity to seek employment earlier than the Program currently does. Another advantage of a more accelerated Program is that Program information will be presented in a condensed fashion. Statistics from the Certifying Board of the AAMA in conjunction with the National Board of Medical Examiners show that the shorter, more condensed medical assisting Programs yield more positive outcomes on the credentialing exam than the longer 2-year degree Programs.

Rapid progress through the Medical Assisting Program is feasible. This is illustrated by a number of Community College of Philadelphia students who have progressed through the Program quickly because they have already completed their general education courses and on

some occasions, they have also completed a few of the core allied health classes for the Program prior to admission into the Program. Most of these students are interested in continuing their education to pursue a degree in nursing after completion of the MA Program. Completing the course work and gaining practical experience in a clinical site, will provide them with the necessary skills to gain employment and secure tuition benefits in order for them to pursue a nursing degree. Students will also gain confidence in their abilities and strengthen their skill set, better preparing them to be successful in a nursing and/or other allied health Programs.

Revising the Medical Assisting Program will not alter the need for ongoing faculty development. Preparing graduates to work in the health care industry requires faculty to be attentive to the constant changes in the field. Due to the breadth of the MA curriculum, changes related to factors such as reimbursement, privacy legislation, and point-of-care technology must be incorporated each year in order to provide students with experiences reflective of the current trends in the workplace. Active involvement in the professional organization at the national, state and local levels and a commitment to maintaining continuing education credits in a variety of content areas every year will provide an avenue for the faculty to stay abreast of changes in the profession and address the needs of the health care employers.

Description of the Revision

Substitute a new course, *AH 201 – CPT and ICD Coding for the existing AH 200 – Basic CPT Coding.*

This new course will take the components of AH 200 and AH 202 to meet the accreditation requirements for coding. In order to cover all the necessary competencies and minimize the number of credits needed to graduate, students will gain experience in performing CPT and ICD coding by completing one course.

Delete *MA 250 – Medical Office Laboratory Procedures* from the Program

It is recommended that this course be removed from the Program because some of the content has been incorporated in the newly revised *CLT 102 – Phlebotomy* course. The required competencies for the MA students not addressed in CLT 102 will be included in the *MA 115 – Medications and Medical Specialty Procedures* course.

Replace *BIOL 109 and 110* with *BIOL 108 – Essentials of Human Anatomy and Physiology*

This course is designed to provide students, in various Programs of study, with a comprehensive, one semester course that covers the core principles of human anatomy and physiology directed to health care workers. Previously, the General Biology II (*BIOL 107*) course provided students with subject material that correlated biological structure and function using the human organism as a model. Currently, the *BIOL 107* course is being revised to include additional topics related to viruses, prokaryotes, plants, ecology and comparative anatomy. With this revision, comes the need to have a separate introductory course solely dedicated to human anatomy and physiology.

Add *AH 101 – Introduction to Health Care Professions* to the Program. This course is required for students who are interested in completing the Medical Office Assistant Proficiency Certificate. By adding *AH 101* to the Program, students who have completed the Proficiency Certificate are seamlessly aligned with the MA degree Program should they opt to continue their studies and complete their AAS degree. They will also have a better understanding of the

responsibilities that medical assistants perform in the health care delivery system.

Add Prerequisites to MA 115-Medications and Medical Specialty Procedures. Since students will be able to take a new, one semester BIOL 108 course in place of BIOL 109, BIOL 108 will need to be added to the prerequisites for this course. AH 103 is being added to the course in order to provide students with a foundation in understanding medical terminology utilized in the course. MA 110 is a necessary prerequisite so that students will be able to connect basic theory, practice and techniques learned in MA 110 to more specialized knowledge presented in MA 115. This will enable them to better understand the more complex concepts in MA 115.

IV. Proposed New Course

AH 201 – CPT and ICD Coding

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Students will be introduced to the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) coding system in addition to International Classification of Diseases (ICD) coding. Currently, *AH 200 – Basic CPT Coding* only addresses the procedural coding system for reimbursement. In order to comply with accreditation *Standards*, students must also learn and utilize the ICD coding system. Effective 2013, a new diagnostic coding system will be adopted, ICD-10. This system is much more detailed and comprehensive than the previous system. Students will need the additional hour in lecture to adequately cover the content expected for entry-level medical assistants.

Purpose and Goals

Students will learn how to perform CPT and ICD-9 coding for claims submission. They will be introduced to the ICD-10 coding system which all health care facilities that use the ICD coding system will be required to adopt in 2013.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- List and apply CMS outpatient guidelines in coding diagnoses
- Accurately code diagnoses according to the (ICD) coding system
- Assign CPT codes to procedures and services
- Assign HCPCS level II codes and modifiers.
- Interpret a charge master
- Explain the use of the national provider identifier (NPI)

Major Topics or Units

1. Describe the financial implications of ambulatory patient groups.
2. Perform billing and insurance procedures.
3. Explain why compliance Programs are important in health care for reimbursement.
4. Perform CPT and ICD-9 coding procedures.
5. Understand the similarities and differences between the ICD-9 and ICD 10 coding systems.

Student Learning Activities

Class activities will consist of lecture, discussion, case studies, homework assignments, in-class activities, and multimedia materials.

V. Effects of the Revision

With this revision students will have the opportunity to complete the MA Program in 15 – 18 months after which they can enter the workforce or continue studies for a baccalaureate degree.

This revision will be submitted to the Medical Assisting Education Review Board of the American Association of Medical Assistants' Endowment. Faculty anticipate no problems with accreditation because the number of credits to graduate is comparable to other Medical Assisting degree Programs.

The Program underwent an accreditation site visit in February 2004 and received no citations; this has resulted in the maximum length of ten years of continuing accreditation being granted.

VI. Proposed Catalog Description

Medical Assisting Program

The Medical Assisting (MA) curriculum prepares students to become valuable members of the health care professional team, of prime importance in helping physicians respond successfully to a rapidly changing environment. Graduates can secure positions as medical assistants in physicians' offices, medical clinics and hospitals. Other employment opportunities include working as a phlebotomist, insurance billing specialist and a patient service representative.

Medical assistants perform administrative skills in medical records, appointment scheduling, telephone, financial and operations management. Types of clinical and laboratory skills performed by a medical assistant include: taking vital signs; administering medication; performing electrocardiography and spirometry testing; assisting the physician with specialty examinations; and performing diagnostic laboratory tests in hematology, chemistry, microbiology and immunology.

In addition to the classroom and laboratory components of the Program, the students will spend a required number of hours in two different clinical externship experiences. Externship sites include a hospital or outpatient laboratory and a primary care physician's office or medical clinic where students are given the opportunity to gain experience applying their medical assisting administrative and clinical skills.

Accreditation:

The Community College of Philadelphia's Medical Assisting Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (www.caahep.org) upon the recommendation of the Medical Assisting Education Review Board of the American Association of Medical Assistants' Endowment (AAMAE).

Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs
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Clearwater, FL 33756
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Program graduates are eligible to sit for the national certification examination given by the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) and will earn the Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) (AAMA) credential upon successful completion of the exam. In addition, students who successfully complete *CLT 102 – Phlebotomy* are eligible to take the American Society of Clinical Pathologists (ASCP) Phlebotomy Certification exam.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this Program graduates will be able to:

- Utilize their knowledge to competently and safely perform an expected range of administrative and clinical medical assisting procedures as determined by the AAMA.
- Demonstrate effective communication, critical thinking and problem-solving skills as a medical assistant.
- Meet the expectations of today's health care employers for an entry-level medical assistant.
- Practice within the legal and ethical framework of medical assisting.

Program Entry Requirements:

Requirements for admission to the Medical Assisting Program include:

- High school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED[®]).
- A minimum of one year of high school biology or BIOL 106 or equivalent with “C” or better grades in the past 10 years.
- Applicants must demonstrate readiness for ENGL 101 and MATH 118 as determined by the College's placement tests or by successfully completing identified developmental course work.
- Applicants with previous college experience must have a 2.5 or higher grade point average.
- Applicants must take the College's Allied Health test prior to admission.

Conditions for Acceptance:

- A record of a complete physical examination, including laboratory test results, must be on file in the curriculum coordinator's office. Immunizations, including Hepatitis B, must be on file in the Program office before the start of a clinical education course. Health problems that would interfere with the applicant's ability to meet the Program objectives will be considered individually. Health requirements must be documented in English by a U.S. care provider.
- Verification of medical insurance is mandatory.
- Applicants must attend a scheduled Program orientation prior to entry.

- Students are responsible for purchasing uniforms and other related materials required for the clinical and laboratory experiences of the Program.
- Applicants must obtain a criminal record check and a child abuse clearance prior to entering the Program. Prior criminal records may prevent a student from being eligible to take the national certification examination through the AAMA.
- Applicants must provide proof of a negative drug screening from the College's approved facility.

The following guidelines are used in making decisions about an applicant's criminal and child abuse background:

Child Abuse Clearance

Any record results in denial of admission into the MA Program.

Criminal Background Check

- Any felony conviction within the past ten years results in denial of admission to the MA Program.
- Any felony conviction more than ten years old will be evaluated based on the nature of the offense, length of time since the offense and any explanatory letters/materials submitted by the applicant or student.
- Any misdemeanor will be evaluated based on the nature of the offense, length of time since the offense, and explanatory letter/materials submitted by the applicant or student.

Reconsideration:

An applicant who believes that an error of fact has been made in terms of the information provided to the decision-making committee can request reconsideration by the committee. This request must be made in writing within ten days from the date of the letter notifying the applicant of the decision. The reconsideration should address what the applicant considers to be errors of fact.

Following reconsideration by the decision-making committee, the applicant can appeal the committee's decision to the vice president for Academic Affairs whose decision is final.

Any official change or the initiation of any governmental proceeding affecting the information revealed by the required criminal or child abuse background check must be reported immediately to the MA curriculum supervisor.

Drug Screening:

The MA Program requires participation in clinical education. Some clinical affiliates of the MA Program require evidence of a negative drug screening test in order for a student to participate in the clinical part of the clinical laboratory Program at their facility. Therefore, any student with a positive drug screening test cannot be admitted into the MA Program.

Readmission:

- One-time readmission into the Medical Assisting Program is permitted.
- Students requesting a readmission must meet Program entry requirements.
- Students may be required to retake MA or general education courses as determined by the curriculum coordinator.
- Students who were dropped for unprofessional conduct or safety issues may not be considered for a readmission.
- Students must complete the Program within three years after their initial enrollment.

A select admission process is utilized. To review this process, applicants are encouraged to make an appointment with an Allied Health counselor.

Program of Study Requirements:

- Students in the MA Program may be dropped at any time if, in the opinion of the faculty and curriculum coordinator, such students are not suited to be medical assistants.
- Students whose attitudes and/or behaviors appear inconsistent with professional standards may be dropped from the Program, pending a review by the Program faculty and advisory committee.
- Students may not continue in the MA Program with a “D” or below in any MA course.
- MA students must follow the curriculum sequence according to courses listed in each semester, unless approval to do otherwise is granted by the curriculum coordinator.
- During all clinical experiences, students must maintain client safety and receive a passing grade for the clinical component of a course. Violation of safety may result in immediate clinical failure, an administrative withdrawal from the Program and a failure for the course.
- Students dropped from the Program because of academic deficiencies will be considered for a second admission to the Program after remediation of the deficiencies and recommendation of the MA faculty.
- Any student who misses more than one semester of classes in the MA Program may be required to retake previous MA clinical course(s). Upon returning to the College, each student will be required to perform testing on previous competencies administered in MA clinical course(s) and successfully pass them with 85% accuracy. Failure to do so will require the student to repeat the associated clinical course(s).

Program of Study and Graduation Requirements

To qualify for the Associate in Applied Science degree in Medical Assisting, students must complete 64 credit hours as prescribed, attain a grade point average of 2.0 or better and no grade below "C" in any required course for the curriculum.

Medical Assisting

Course Number and Name	Prerequisites and Corequisites	Credits	Gen Ed Req.
FIRST SEMESTER			
AH 101 – Introduction to Health Care Professions		3	
MATH 118 – Intermediate Algebra		3	Mathematics
SECOND SEMESTER			
MA 110-Introduction to Clinical Skills	Prerequisite: AH 101; Corequisite: AH 103	3	
AH 103-Medical Terminology		3	
ENGL 101 – English Composition		3	
BIOL 108- Essentials of Anatomy and Physiology ¹		4	Science
AH 116 – Interpersonal and Professional Skills in Health Care		3	
THIRD SEMESTER			
MA 115 – Medications and Medical Specialty Procedures	MA 110; AH 103, BIOL 108	3	
AH 120-Reimbursement Methodologies in Health Care		3	
CLT 102 - Phlebotomy		4	
AH 112 – Medical Administrative Procedures		3	
CIS 103 – Applied Computer Technology		3	Comp Tech
FOURTH SEMESTER			
AH 204 – Medical Law and Ethics	ENGL 101	3	
ENGL 102 – The Research Paper	ENGL 101	3	Composition & Info Lit
AH 190 – Human Disease and Treatment	AH 103, BIOL 108 or BIOL 109	3	
AH 220 – Information Management Systems in Health Care	AH 112 and CIS 103	3	
FIFTH SEMESTER			
AH 201- CPT AND ICD Coding	AH 103; AH 190; and BIOL 108 or BIOL 109	4	
MA 299 – Medical Assisting Externship	CLT 102, MA 115, MA 204	4	American/ Global Diversity
Humanities elective		3	Humanities
Social Science elective		3	Social Science
MINIMUM CREDITS NEEDED TO GRADUATE		64	

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

All General Education requirements are met through required courses (as indicated above) except for the **Writing Intensive** requirement and the **Interpretive Studies** requirement. Therefore, in order to graduate, students in this Program must choose one course that is designated Writing Intensive and one course that is designated Interpretive Studies. The same course may be used to fulfill both requirements. A list of courses that fulfill these requirements and a more detailed explanation of the College's general education requirements appears elsewhere in this catalog and on www.ccp.edu.

¹ The two semester Anatomy and Physiology sequence (BIOL 109-BIOL 110) may be used in place of BIOL 108 provided that students complete both BIOL 109 and BIOL 110. Students interested in pursuing a Bachelor's degree may wish to take the BIOL 109-BIOL 110 course sequence for transfer purposes.

For More Information Contact:

The Division of Math, Science and Health Careers, Room W2-7, 1700 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130, Telephone (215) 751-8431; or the College Information Center (215) 751 8010.