

# 2024 - 2025 Medical Assistant Student Handbook Supplement

Effective September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2025

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# **Welcome to the Medical Assistant Student Handbook Supplement**

It is a pleasure to welcome you to Berkeley College. We are glad that you have chosen us to assist you in attaining your educational goals. Everyone at the College wishes you an enjoyable and productive academic year.

This Medical Assistant Student Handbook Supplement is intended to clarify policies and procedures specific to the Medical Assistant program. The policies in this Student Handbook Supplement supersede any conflicting statements made by faculty, administrators, the general Berkeley College Student Handbook, and the Undergraduate Catalog. The Medical Assistant Student Handbook Supplement is updated regularly. You are urged to provide us with recommendations and suggestions for future revisions by communicating your ideas to Student Development and Campus Life.

The faculty of the School of Health Studies is committed to guiding and assisting you in your academic career. You, in turn, have a responsibility to familiarize yourself with the policies and procedures of the College.

Once again, welcome from the entire Berkeley College community. We look forward to assisting you in reaching your goals!

## **Overview**

The policies and procedures outlined in this Student Handbook Supplement are specific to the Medical Assistant program. By participating in the Medical Assistant program you are agreeing to abide by the policies and procedures outlined in the Medical Assistant Student Handbook Supplement. These program-specific policies and procedures supersede any statements made by faculty, administrators, the general Berkeley College Student Handbook, and the Undergraduate Catalog. Students should refer to the Undergraduate Catalog and the general Berkeley College Student Handbook for all other College policies.

# Medical Assistant Program Goals and Objectives

## Program Goals

Berkeley College's Medical Assistant Associate in Applied Science degree and certificate programs prepare students to enter the high-demand field of healthcare and to work in a variety of settings, including physicians' offices, hospitals, and other professional healthcare facilities. Graduates are prepared to meet both the clinical and administrative challenges of today's rapidly changing healthcare environment.

The program is designed to prepare medical assistants who are competent in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains to enter the profession. This is accomplished by providing curriculum relating to patient care skills, general study, and administrative/business skills.

The goals for completion of the Medical Assistant program are:

- Reading and Written Communication: Students will demonstrate competency in reading and writing.
- Oral Communication: Students will demonstrate effective oral communication skills that incorporate emotional intelligence, empathy, and civility.
- Critical Analysis and Reasoning: Students will apply critical thinking and the knowledge gained in their degree programs for better decision-making informed by:
  - # Ethical Reasoning
  - # Quantitative Reasoning
  - # Scientific Reasoning
- Knowledge and Skills for Living in a Diverse Society: Students will respect multiple perspectives and cultural contexts when making decisions independently or as part of a team.
- Information Literacy: Students will be able to locate, evaluate, and ethically utilize reliable information, empowering them as informed and responsible citizens.
- Integration of Learning: Students will develop the ability to make connections between different academic studies and specialized professional skills leading to more informed, creative, and productive decisions in life and career.
- Prepare students as multi-skilled and nationally credentialed healthcare practitioners who perform a wide range of roles in physicians' offices and other healthcare settings.
- Prepare students who are professional and proficient in administrative and clinical tasks such as medical record keeping and documentation, patient communication, and clinical skills (EKG, venipuncture, vital signs, physical exam, CPR, etc.).
- Instruct students to employ HIPAA, OSHA, Standard Precautions, and other infection control measures in the healthcare setting.
- Ensure students enter the workforce as qualified and technically skilled healthcare professionals in the ever-changing healthcare environment.
- Educate students regarding the ethical, legal, and professional principles of the healthcare profession and in the scope of their practice as a patient advocate.

- Prepare students to effectively interact with patients, families, and members of the healthcare team in a therapeutic and professional manner.

## **Program Objectives**

The objective of the Medical Assistant program is to train students in the skills and competencies required to perform the clinical and administrative duties of a medical assistant. The program objectives are based on the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domain competencies established by the Commission of Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) as outlined in the [2022 Standards and Guidelines for Medical Assisting Educational Programs](#).

## Accreditation

The Medical Assistant Certificate program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP), the largest programmatic accreditor in the health sciences field. CAAHEP accredits medical assisting programs based on the recommendation of the Medical Assistant Education Review Board.

The Associate in Applied Science degree program is an extension of the career-track certificate program. Graduates of the Associate in Applied Science degree program are also issued a diploma in Medical Assisting.

Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs

9355 – 113<sup>th</sup> Street North, #7709

Seminole, FL 33775

727-210-2350

[www.caahep.org](http://www.caahep.org)

## Core Performance Standards

The Medical Assistant program prepares students to be entry-level medical assistants in a clinical setting. The profession's scope of practice requires demonstration of responsibilities and accountability within the role and the competencies expected of a medical assistant. It is important to note that the medical assistant profession is physically, mentally, and emotionally demanding.

The School of Health Studies is committed to providing reasonable accommodation in its academic programs to qualified individuals with disabilities, including but not limited to learning disabilities. A reasonable accommodation is one that does not require a fundamental alteration to the nature of the program or lower academic and/or clinical standards.

Throughout the program, students must be able to perform in a reasonably independent and timely manner that does not affect the quality of care, the safety of patients or other individuals, and in a way that does not adversely affect the School of Health Studies, clinical affiliates, or any member of the healthcare team.

Students must be able to meet all of the performance standards outlined below, with or without reasonable accommodation, in order to be admitted and progress in the program. Individuals requiring accommodations while enrolled in the program are encouraged to speak with a representative of the College's Office of Accessibility Services before enrolling in clinical and/or laboratory courses.

Some chronic or recurrent illnesses and problems could interfere with patient care and safety, and may be incompatible with a career as a medical assistant. Students in the Medical Assistant program are not required to disclose any chronic or recurrent illness and/or disability; however, those with concerns about meeting any technical standards are strongly encouraged to discuss the issues with the Department Chair and/or the Office of Accessibility Services.

It is the student's responsibility to understand the duties, responsibilities, skills, and abilities required to be a medical assistant. In addition to the technical standards described below, students are encouraged to review the information regarding medical assisting at the [O\\*NET website](#).

The following list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but instead it offers examples of required activities. Students are encouraged to review the standards carefully; if there are any questions or concerns, they should be discussed with the Chair of the Allied Health – Medical Department and/or the Office of Accessibility Services.

### Communication-Based Standards

- Able to effectively communicate with others in English, both verbally and in writing
- Possess sufficient communication skills (verbal, nonverbal, and written) to interact with others
- Ability to hear and observe clinical staff and patients in order to accurately assess vital signs; elicit information; perceive nonverbal communications; describe

changes in mood, activity, and posture; and recognize and respond to an emergency situation

- Possess appropriate interpersonal communication skills to interact positively with all persons, regardless of race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation
- Apply the principles of confidentiality, respect, and discretion

### **Physical Strength (Gross Motor Control)**

- Ability to lift 25 pounds unassisted in a safe manner, thereby protecting yourself, the client, and those in close proximity to you.
- Bend and/or lift to assist client with activities of daily living and manipulate client equipment.
- Lift to safely transfer or position all clients in various situations.
- Move, push, or pull equipment such as beds, stretchers, wheelchairs, etc.
- Ability to raise arms over one's head in order to assist clients and manipulate equipment.
- Walk/stand for extended periods and distances over an eight-hour period.

### **Manual Dexterity (Fine Motor Movement)**

- Accurately manipulate dials, gauges, buttons, and switches to set, monitor, and care for client care-related equipment.
- Safely and effectively perform dressing procedures without contaminating the wound.
- Successfully don and remove protective apparel (including sterile gloves) to maintain standard precautions.
- Perform all laboratory and clinical skills within a pre-established timeframe that ensures safe patient care.

## Academic Policies

- [Academic Progression and Grading Criteria](#)
- [Add/Drop Policy](#)
- [Appeals](#)
- [Attendance and Participation](#)
- [Class Hours](#)
- [Course Withdrawal](#)
- [Credit for Prior Learning](#)
- [Graduation Requirements](#)
- [Practicum Requirements](#)
- [Repeating the Practicum Course and Automatic Dismissal](#)
- [Transfer Credit](#)

## **Add/Drop Policy**

Students interested in adding a course or courses to their schedule must meet with the Academic Advisement Department to obtain approval prior to the start of the second week of the term. Requests will be considered only if appropriate arrangements can be made to make up missed class time. Clinical courses cannot be added to a student's schedule after the start of the term.

## **Attendance and Participation**

Attendance, punctuality, and professionalism are key elements of any healthcare professional role. Unexcused absences or habitual tardiness, at lecture, laboratory, clinical/internship/practicum experiences, and other similar experiences, will not be tolerated and could result in dismissal from training and failure of the course.

Students are expected to participate in each of their courses through regular attendance at lecture, laboratory, clinical/internship/practicum training, and other similar experiences. Students are expected to meet the requirements of coursework as assigned, including completing assignments as scheduled. For courses in which some of the meetings are asynchronous, e.g., remote or blended learning, students are expected to participate in a similar manner.

While attendance itself is not used as a criterion for academic evaluations, grading is frequently based on participation in class discussion, laboratory work, performance, field experience, or other activities which may take place during class sessions. In addition, attendance is required for in-class assessments. If these areas for evaluation make class attendance essential, the student may be penalized for failure to perform satisfactorily in the required activities. Grading based on participation in class activities must be explained in the course syllabus.

In all circumstances, it remains the student's responsibility to promptly initiate discussion about absence and arrangements for making up any missed work with each instructor. Students are encouraged to work directly with their instructor for any needed flexibility, and with the Program Chair for supplemental support as needed. Absences from class are handled between students and instructors.

## **Class Absence**

Absences from class are handled between students and instructors (in the case of the clinical training between students and the clinical instructor or clinical preceptor). The instructor may request documentation to substantiate the reason for the absence and consider said documentation at their discretion, while maintaining a student's right to privacy. Students are expected to provide requested documentation in a timely manner.

## **Advance Notification for Non-Emergency Planned Absence(s)**

A student may need to schedule a planned absence from class. The student should discuss the planned absence(s) with the appropriate program representative and receive approval two weeks prior to the day(s) of absence. Table 1, Notification Policy for Non-emergency Planned Absences, offers instructions on the appropriate program representative School of Health Studies students must inform regarding the planned non-emergency absences. Upon advanced notification excused absences may be granted for situations specifically addressed below.

- For Absence Due to Religious Observance
- Participation or attendance at events sanctioned by College and/or the School of Health Studies
- Academic pursuits
- Non-emergency medical reasons (e.g., elective surgeries or treatments)
- Planned Absence Due to Career Services Activities
- For Planned Absence Due to Active Military Duty

**Outside conflicts need to be avoided; for example, students must not schedule work hours or other obligations during synchronous class sessions, which could be in person or online, during clinical/internship/practicum training, or during the final assessment period. Students should not schedule leisure activities/vacations during the scheduled academic session course dates and the final assessment period. It is expected that every student will be present, on time, and prepared to participate when scheduled class sessions begin.**

Table 1. Notification Policy for Non-emergency Planned Intermittent Short Absences

	<b>Course Type &amp; Who to Notify</b>		
<b>Program</b>	<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Laboratory</b>	<b>Clinical Training (including rotation, internship, practicum)</b>
Medical Assisting	Instructor	Instructor	Clinical Site, and Practicum Coordinator, and Submit <i>Excused Absence Request Form</i> and Receive approval prior to planned absence

Failure to provide advance notification will result in the absence(s) being considered unexcused. Advance notice is not expected in cases of sudden illness or other unforeseen conflicts. Refer to the section below for non-planned absences.

## **Excused Absence Criteria for Non-Planned Absences**

In case of an emergency, sudden illness or other unforeseen conflicts, students may request for an absence to be marked as an excused absence, by filling the Excused Absence Request Form. Excused absences are granted for situations specifically addressed below. All absence requests must be accompanied by contemporaneous supporting documentation. The following criteria are recognized for granting excused absences:

1. The student has a death in the immediate family. An announcement of the family member's funeral arrangements may be presented as supporting documentation.

2. The student is admitted to a healthcare facility to receive necessary medical care. In the case of an injury or illness, a physician's note (and/or evidence documenting such an absence) is required. The Program Chair or the Clinical Coordinator reserve the right to ask for additional supporting documentation in support of the physician's note. Seeing a doctor does not satisfy the requirement for a medical excuse. Late presentation of a note or retroactive application may affect the determination of whether the absence is excused.
3. Situations beyond the control of the student and related to exceptional circumstances.
4. Special Circumstances
  - a. Should requests for academic flexibility be made by the Student Development and Campus Life (SDCL) and the Title IX Coordinator - from the perspective of a Reporter victim or a Respondent, on behalf of a student, instructors will work with the student and the SDCL as necessary/appropriate to determine the type of flexibility/accommodation the student may benefit from.

Table 2. Notification Policy for Emergency Intermittent Short Absences

	<b>Course Type &amp; Who to Notify</b>		
<b>Program</b>	<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Laboratory</b>	<b>Clinical Training (including rotation, internship, practicum)</b>
Medical Assisting	Instructor	Instructor	Clinical Site, and Practicum Coordinator, and Submit <i>Excused Absence Request Form</i>

## **Attendance and Participation During Clinical Training**

### **Excused Absence**

Due to the very specific nature of the student learning goals and outcomes, the number of absences during laboratory and clinical training is limited even when the absences may fall under the excused absence criteria. The table below shows the number of permissible excused absences for each clinical/internship/practicum course.

<b>Course</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Total Clinical Hours</b>	<b>Excused Absences</b>	<b>Make-up Needed</b>
MED2280	MA	165	2	Yes

## **Tardiness (Applies to Both Laboratory and Clinical Training)**

Repeated tardiness is considered improper professional behavior and may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the clinical sites, failure of this course, and/or dismissal from the program. Clinical or laboratory tardiness is defined as arriving after the designated start time of the clinical or laboratory experience. A student who anticipates being late to clinical or laboratory, must directly contact the College Representative\* as instructed (e.g., the clinical or laboratory instructor, the clinical site monitor, and/or the clinical coordinator), or a representative of the clinical site (students to follow instructions provided by the clinical coordinator). Student must inform (report to) the College representative (e.g., faculty, or the site monitor) or the Clinical facility representative as soon as they arrive at the clinical site.

- The first tardy occurrence will result in a verbal warning and a note will be placed on the student's record.
- A second tardy occurrence will result in a written warning, student will be sent home, and an absence will be recorded for the component of the course (laboratory or clinical experience).
- A third tardy occurrence will result in the student dismissal from the clinical site\*\* and course failure\*\*\*.

\*Note: Students must inform the instructor of College Representative. Communicating being late to another student is not permitted.

\*\*Note for Medical Assisting Practicum: If a student is dismissed from the practicum site for cause, Berkeley College is not obligated to place the student at another Practicum site. Therefore, the student will be subject to dismissal from the Practicum training and course failure. In such cases, student's graduation will be delayed.

\*\*\*A course failure may result in program dismissal based on the maximum number of course failures allowed for the program.

## **Unexcused Absence**

As stated in prior sections of the policy, students are required to inform representatives of the School of Health Studies (faculty, or the Clinical Coordinator, and/or the Program Chair) that they will not be at the clinical site. For specific programs students must notify the clinical facility as well. Instances when the student does not attend a clinical training day and fails to inform the College representative and/or the Clinical site representative (a.k.a. No Call, No Show) will result in dismissal from clinical training and course failure.

Extenuating circumstances that impede the student to provide the required notification will be evaluated by the Program Chair. It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation that clearly demonstrates that the student could not provide the mandatory notification on-time.

## **Class Hours**

Generally, classes are in session from 7:00 AM to 11:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Saturday classes may be scheduled from 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Clinical rotations may be scheduled from 7:00 AM until 12 midnight, Monday through Saturday.

## **Course Withdrawal**

Students who wish to drop a course must do so in writing and must have the approval of the Academic Advisement Department. Courses dropped during the first two weeks of classes do not appear on the student's transcript. Withdrawal from a 15-week course between weeks three and 12 will result in a grade of WP or WF, which indicates whether the student was passing or failing the course at the time it was dropped.

Medical Assistant students are only eligible to take the Practicum course twice throughout the Medical Assistant program. Medical Assistant students who receive a grade of D or below in the Practicum course, or who withdraw from the course, may repeat that course. Students who receive a grade of D or below in the repeated course, or who withdraw for a second time, will be dismissed automatically from the Medical Assistant program.

A grade of W will be assigned to students who enrolled in but did not participate in a course. Students who do not officially drop a course will receive a letter grade that reflects their achievement.

## **Credit for Prior Learning**

Students enrolled in the Medical Assistant program may be eligible to receive credit for prior learning if they possess active, and in good standing, healthcare licenses or certifications. Details regarding the College's Credit for Prior Learning policy can be found in the [2024-2025 Undergraduate Catalog](#).

## Graduation Requirements

To qualify for graduation, students in the Medical Assistant program must fulfill the following requirements:

- Pass Medical Terminology as well as each MED course with a minimum grade of C (70%)
- Pass Anatomy and Physiology I and Anatomy and Physiology II with a minimum grade of C+ (75%)
- Successfully complete 100% of all program competencies with a minimum grade of 85% on each competency
- Successfully complete the prescribed course of study with a minimum average of 2.00 (C)
- Successfully complete the prescribed number of practicum hours
- Meet the credit-hour requirements for the major
- Discharge all financial obligations to the College
- Participate in a National Commission for Certifying Agencies credentialing examination for Medical Assisting

Additional information regarding graduation can be found in the [2024-2025 Undergraduate Catalog](#).

## **Practicum Requirements**

All students enrolled in the Medical Assistant program are required to attend a mandatory practicum orientation prior to being placed at a practicum site. Students will be notified well in advance of the day, time, and location of the orientation meeting. Failure to attend this mandatory orientation will result in withdrawal or failure of MED2280.

To pass the practicum course, students must remain at the practicum site for the duration of their scheduled assignment, accumulate the total number of prescribed hours as outlined in the Medical Assistant Practicum Handbook, and successfully complete all course requirements. If, for some reason, a student is unable to remain at the practicum site for the duration of his/her assignment, the student must contact the instructor and the practicum coordinator immediately.

Medical Assistant students are only eligible to take the Practicum course twice throughout the Medical Assistant program. Medical Assistant students who receive a grade of D or below in the Practicum course, or who withdraw from the course, may repeat that course. Students who receive a grade of D or below in the repeated course, or who withdraw for a second time, will be dismissed automatically from the Medical Assistant program.

## **Policies and Processes for Assignment of Clinical Experiences**

The Practicum Coordinator (PC), working collaboratively with the Career Services Department, will select ambulatory healthcare facilities that agree to provide a supervised training experience for students enrolled in the Medical Assistant program. Practicum sites are selected based on the ability of the sites to provide an atmosphere that allows students to ask questions, sharpen skills, and be coached with the goal of improved performance. The Practicum experience is designed to complement the concepts and materials which were presented to students during the lecture and laboratory portions of their program.

The PC and Career Services staff members will meet with students the semester prior to their enrollment in the Practicum course to coordinate practicum placement. The placement can be made within a 30-mile radius of the student's home campus and depends upon site availability. Practicum sites are selected and assigned under the same guidelines utilized in the Equal Employment Opportunity Act.

Once students are placed at the practicum site, the PC will provide oversight of student assessments and will meet with the site representatives regularly. The PC will discuss each student's progress at least once during the student's practicum experience, and more frequently if necessary. The PC is always available to students and site representatives to discuss any concerns about student attendance, performance, or professionalism.

Assessment during the practicum experience is ongoing. Practicum site supervisors will complete weekly site evaluations, which are signed by both the supervisor and the

student. The PC and faculty member assigned to the Medical Assistant Capstone and Practicum Course (MED2280) will review these evaluations to ensure students are meeting the goals and expectations of the Practicum experience. At the conclusion of the 165-hour practicum, site supervisors will also complete a final evaluation, which identifies students' strengths and weaknesses. Site supervisors will review these evaluations with the students, and both parties must sign the document before it is submitted to the PC for review.

In addition, students will complete weekly journals reflecting on their experiences at the practicum site; and those weekly journals will be reviewed and signed by both the site supervisor and student before being submitted to the PC. All performance evaluations and weekly journals will be retained by the Program and will be stored in Perceptive Content, an electronic document management system used by the College to store images of documents.

## **Academic Progression and Grading Criteria**

### **Passing Grade**

The minimum passing grade required for Medical Terminology and all Medical (MED) courses is a C (70 percent). Any grade below a C (70 percent) is a failing grade. Therefore, students must receive at least a C (70 percent) in the above-mentioned courses in order to satisfy course requirements for the Medical Assistant program. A failure in the lecture, laboratory, or practicum portion of a MED course will result in a failing grade for the entire course.

The minimum passing grade required for Anatomy and Physiology I and Anatomy and Physiology II is a C+ (75 percent). Any grade below a C+ (75 percent) is a failing grade. Therefore, students must receive at least a C+ (75 percent) in these courses in order to satisfy course requirements for the Medical Assistant program.

### **Repeating Courses**

Students enrolled in the Medical Assistant program who receive a failing grade as outlined above in Medical Terminology, Anatomy and Physiology I and II, and/or any Medical (MED) course must repeat the course(s) in order to progress in the program.

Students are reminded that they may only attempt to pass a single course two times, including one repeat. A student wishing to take a course for a third time, regardless of whether the repeated grade is passing or failing, must obtain written permission from the Dean of the School/Division in which the course is offered.

Note that failed courses may lead to repeat charges and may also delay graduation.

### **Medical Assistant Competencies**

Students enrolled in the Medical Assistant program must pass 100 percent of all program competencies with a minimum grade of 85 percent in order to graduate. The maximum number of attempts to pass each competency is three (3).

## **Repeating the Practicum Course and Automatic Dismissal**

Medical Assistant students are only eligible to take the Practicum course twice throughout the Medical Assistant program. Medical Assistant students who receive a grade of D or below in the Practicum course, or who withdraw from the course, may repeat that course. Students who receive a grade of D or below in the repeated course, or who withdraw for a second time, will be dismissed automatically from the Medical Assistant program.

## Transfer Credit

In addition to the transfer credit guidelines outlined in the [Berkeley College 2024-2025 Undergraduate Catalog](#), students enrolled in the Medical Assistant program who wish to have credits considered for transfer must note the following:

- A grade of C+ or higher is required for Science (SCI) transfer credits, and the credits must have been earned within the last five years.
- Courses that contain clinical or laboratory credits are not eligible for transfer credit due to the affective and psychomotor learning domains covered in clinical and laboratory experiences.

Note that transfer credit will be evaluated on a course-by-course basis based on the recommendation of the Department Chair/Director and/or School Dean.

## **Program Dismissal Appeal**

Students who are dismissed from the Medical Assistant program for violating policies outlined in this Student Handbook Supplement will receive official notification from the College's Allied Health - Medical Department Chair. Any student dismissed from the program for reasons other than academic integrity violations may ask for a review of the circumstances leading to the dismissal and request the possibility of being readmitted into the program. This appeal should be sent to the Allied Health - Medical Department Chair within six (6) months of the date of dismissal using the following mechanism:

- Student outlines a written appeal to the Chair of the program of study detailing reasons why the dismissal should be reversed. Such appeal should include relevant documentation, a detailed summary of the circumstances that have changed that will lead to success, and any other appropriate supporting facts.
- The Chair will review the appeal and conduct an appropriate investigation with a Committee comprised of representatives of the School of Health Studies.
- After reviewing all relevant documentation, the Committee will deliberate, vote, and present their final decision to the Department Chair who will then share it with the School Dean. All decisions made by the Committee will be final and cannot be appealed. The Department Chair will notify the student and Academic Advisement of the Committee's decision in a letter sent via email.

# Berkeley College Emergency Management Plan

Berkeley College's Emergency Management Master Plan describes how the College will function during emergency situations. The plan contains clear strategies and roles played by the campus-based Emergency Management Team during the initial response and throughout the emergency. The plan also outlines the responsibilities of the Crisis Management Team, consisting of the College President and senior administrators. Nothing in this plan shall be construed in a manner that limits the use of good judgment and common sense in matters not foreseen or covered by the elements of the plan. Click to view the [Emergency Management Plan](#).

## Emergency Preparedness Plan

### Medical Assisting Unexpected Departure of Key Personnel

The following plan is in place to assure the continuity of educational services when key personnel within the Medical Assistant department are absent for a prolonged period.

#### Department Head/Program Director:

- The Dean's office has continuous access to all programmatic documentation, which is available via the College's SharePoint site and Program Director's OneDrive.
- The Dean's office and the faculty have continuous access to all curriculum content and resources, which are available via the College's Learning Management System (LMS) to ensure continued curriculum delivery.
- If access to the LMS is unavailable, faculty have alternate electronic access via their personal accounts with the publishers and/or hard copies of the program textbook, study guide, course exams, answer keys, resources, and competency assessment forms.
- In the event of extended internet outage, course content housed in the College's LMS can be downloaded and viewed offline as an e-pub file by both students and faculty.
- All faculty are provided with the most recent electronic copy of the program schedule, faculty handbook, course syllabus, and faculty calendar at the start of each semester.
- Upon completion and submission of each Annual Report Form, an electronic copy of the final report along with all supporting raw data, is posted in the Department's SharePoint, which the Dean's office can access, to assure programmatic continuity.

#### Practicum Coordinator

- The Dean's office and Career Services staff have continuous access to all Practicum documentation and records, which are housed in the College's SharePoint and OneDrive sites. Practicum documentation includes clinical placement status and contacts to ensure awareness and continuity of schedules.
- Students' hours and site evaluations documentation are stored in Perceptive Content, the College's document management system, which is used for scanning,

archiving, and retrieving documents, as well as in the Medical Assistant Capstone and Practicum Canvas course.

- The Dean's office, as well as the College's Compliance Department, has copies of all signed clinical affiliation agreements for the Medical Assistant program.

### **Disruption of On-campus Instruction**

- A full range of student support services and resources, including the Library, Academic Advisement, Office of Career Services, Student Development and Campus Life, Office of Accessibility Services, Center for Academic Success and the Office of Military and Veterans Affairs, are available both on-site and online.
- In the event of a disruption to on-campus instruction, the Program will transition to virtual instruction methods that will take place in a synchronous format. This delivery format pertains to the theory portion of the core curriculum and will include video skill demonstration and simulation. Skills evaluation will be scheduled when in-person instruction can safely be resumed.
- Virtual instruction methods will be monitored for effectiveness by evaluating student progress and providing additional e-learning resources to assist students with adapting to this modality.
- Classroom and labs are equipped to hold virtual instruction via Canvas Conference, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams. The College's LMS is designed to be used for assignments, discussions, and quizzes. Secure Exam Proctor on Canvas will be utilized for all exams. The College will support the technology required. IT requests will be monitored.
- In the event of state of emergency, when students cannot participate in internship or the sites cannot accommodate interns, the method of internship may be able to be completed using software simulation or case studies based on guidance provided by the programmatic accreditors.
- If simulation and case studies are not approved as alternatives to satisfy internship requirements, affected internship assignments may delay graduation time due to internship hour requirements. The Practicum Coordinator will work with each individual clinical site to determine current availability and/or changes to schedules that may be necessary. If a site is no longer able to accommodate a student, all efforts will be made to find an alternative site in a timely manner.
- In the event graduation is delayed, the Program Director/ Practicum Coordinator will provide each student with an action plan to complete their education. All student documentation will be maintained.
- The Program will maintain documentation on how the outcomes of the Program were met during the interruption.
- Program Advisory Committee members will be made aware of changes resulting from a disruption of education.
- The Program will keep the Medical Assistant Education Review Board (MAERB) appraised of all changes related to the disruption of in-class instruction, as appropriate, and will maintain all action plans and courses of strategy for the duration of the emergency.

## Practicum Requirements and Responsibilities

- [Criminal Background Check and Drug Screening](#)
- [Health Requirements](#)
- [Latex Sensitivity](#)
- [Practicum Overview](#)

## **Criminal Background Check and Drug Screening**

All students in the Medical Assistant program are obligated to meet the requirements of their assigned practicum site. Some sites require students to pass a criminal background check and a drug screening. Therefore, all students must be prepared to pass a criminal background check and a drug screen prior to participating in the practicum course. Criminal background checks may be conducted annually or at the discretion of clinical affiliates.

If a charge, arrest, and/or conviction occurs while a student is enrolled in the Medical Assistant program, it is the student's responsibility to inform the Department Chair. This notification must be in writing and must occur within two days after the event occurs. The required notification must include a description of the circumstances surrounding the charge, arrest, and/or conviction. Subsequent to this notification, the student should make an appointment with the Department Chair to discuss options. Failure to notify the Department Chair of a charge, arrest, and/or conviction may result in the student being removed from the Medical Assistant program.

The American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) guidelines require students to meet certain criteria in order to participate in the Certified Medical Assistant, CMA (AAMA) exam. A full explanation of these guidelines can be found on the AAMA website (<http://www.aama-ntl.org/cma-aama-exam/application-steps/eligibility>). According to the AAMA, students who have been found guilty of a felony or pleaded guilty to a felony are not eligible to participate in the CMA exam. In some instances, the Certifying Board may grant a waiver based upon mitigating circumstances. Students who need to submit a Request for Waiver should discuss this option with the Department Chair.

## **Health Requirements**

In addition to adhering to all Berkeley College policies regarding health and safety, students enrolled in the Medical Assistant program are encouraged to be immunized against hepatitis B and tetanus. Students are required to comply with all health and safety related requirements established by their assigned practicum site. Necessary immunizations can be obtained from the local public health department at a nominal cost. The cost associated with these immunizations will be borne by the student.

Clinical affiliates may require clinical students to have a yearly influenza vaccine. A COVID vaccine and available boosters are strongly recommended. Please note that some sites may also require weekly PCR testing in addition to the COVID vaccination series. Clinical affiliates also may require students to provide proof of individual health insurance or be an eligible dependent or beneficiary of another person's accident and health insurance policy. Students not able to meet these requirements may find it difficult to complete the required clinical rotation(s) and/or progress in the program.

## **Health Advisory**

Berkeley College's Medical Assistant program is physically and mentally challenging. During the clinical and laboratory portions of the program, students will be exposed to healthcare situations where there is an increased risk of exposure to strenuous activity, communicable diseases, radiation, and toxic substances.

Medical Assistant students may be exposed to a variety of other situations and substances which could potentially affect students with medical conditions that include, but are not limited to, asthma, allergies, and pregnancy. If a student becomes pregnant during the practicum, these exposures can harm the student's unborn baby. If you are concerned, you should consult with your healthcare provider prior to participating in the clinical practicum to ensure you are physically capable of remaining in the program and meeting all relevant technical standards outlined in this Handbook. Neither Berkeley College nor its affiliating clinical agencies shall be held responsible for any harm that might occur to a fetus or pregnant student.

Any student who is unable to continue in clinical courses based on the recommendation of her/his healthcare provider will be afforded the opportunity, once medically cleared, to return to the program pending course availability.

## **Latex Sensitivity**

Healthcare facilities may have numerous items that have a natural latex rubber component. Unforeseen exposure and sensitivity may result from repeated exposure to the protein associated with natural latex rubber (commonly found in powdered gloves). True allergies are rare, but latex sensitivities can be seen in approximately eight to twelve percent of healthcare workers.

Students with known latex sensitivity and/or allergies must provide the College's ADA Coordinator with documentation of the specific sensitivity/allergy along with suggested safety guidelines from the healthcare provider in order to request a reasonable accommodation. Information regarding the student's latex sensitivity/allergy will be shared with clinical affiliates as applicable.

Students with documented latex sensitivity/allergies are responsible for carrying their own medication to counteract the allergy. Any costs related to the allergy screening and/or treatment will be borne by the student.

If a student has a suspected reaction, he or she must report it to the clinical site as well as to the College's Clinical Coordinator and ADA Coordinator.

Berkeley College cannot guarantee a latex-free environment, including in its classrooms, laboratories, and/or during clinical rotations.

## **Practicum Overview**

### **Overview**

While in school, students will gain knowledge and skills that will prepare them for their new career. The practicum is designed to provide students with the opportunity to utilize this newfound knowledge under the supervision of medical professionals. Through this system of performance and feedback, students will acquire confidence and viable experience to complement their classroom training.

The practicum will consist of training, usually completed within an academic term. In addition to the off-site practicum hours, students are required to attend weekly on-campus seminars. Each student is expected to accommodate the regular hours of the practicum site, including Saturdays, Sundays, and/or evenings. If a student holds a job and his/her scheduled work schedule conflicts with the practicum hours, then the student's College program must take precedence. A student in a practicum observes the regularly scheduled office hours of the site assigned, rather than the College's vacation, holiday, or snow hours. Since a prescribed number of hours is required for practicum, the student is responsible for making up all hours missed due to hours canceled by the office. Students must remain at the site for the duration of their scheduled practicum.

Since the practicum period is a culmination of the student's program and permits the student to practice in a realistic work setting prior to graduation, it is a prerequisite for a student to satisfactorily complete most courses within the program prior to enrolling in the practicum course.

Students will not receive compensation/payment, monetary or otherwise, for the practicum experience. Although practicum sites may hire a student, under no circumstances are they ever obligated to do so.

### **Policies and Processes for Assignment of Clinical Experiences**

The Practicum Coordinator (PC), working collaboratively with the Career Services Department, will select ambulatory healthcare facilities that agree to provide a supervised training experience for students enrolled in the Medical Assistant program. Practicum sites are selected based on the ability of the sites to provide an atmosphere that allows students to ask questions, sharpen skills, and be coached with the goal of improved performance. The Practicum experience is designed to complement the concepts and materials which were presented to students during the lecture and laboratory portions of their program.

The PC and Career Services staff members will meet with students the semester prior to their enrollment in the Practicum course to coordinate practicum placement. It is unrealistic for a student to expect that the practicum site will be in his/her neighborhood setting. The placement can be made within a 30-mile radius of the student's home

campus and depends upon site availability. Practicum sites are selected and assigned under the same guidelines utilized in the Equal Employment Opportunity Act.

Once students are placed at the practicum site, the PC will provide oversight of student assessments and will meet with the site representatives regularly. The PC will discuss each student's progress at least once during the student's practicum experience, and more frequently if necessary. The PC is always available to students and site representatives to discuss any concerns about student attendance, performance, or professionalism.

Assessment during the practicum experience is ongoing. Practicum site supervisors will complete weekly site evaluations, which are signed by both the supervisor and the student. The PC and faculty member assigned to the Medical Assistant Capstone and Practicum Course (MED2280) will review these evaluations to ensure students are meeting the goals and expectations of the Practicum experience. At the conclusion of the 165-hour practicum, site supervisors will also complete a final evaluation, which identifies students' strengths and weaknesses. Site supervisors will review these evaluations with the students, and both parties must sign the document before it is submitted to the PC for review.

In addition, students will complete weekly journals reflecting on their experiences at the practicum site; and those weekly journals will be reviewed and signed by both the site supervisor and student before being submitted to the PC. All performance evaluations and weekly journals will be retained by the Program and will be stored in Perceptive Content, an electronic document management system used by the College to store images of documents.

## Student Rights and Responsibilities

- [Complaints and Grievances](#)
- [Confidentiality](#)
- [Dress Code](#)
- [Informed Consent](#)
- [Professionalism](#)

## **Complaints and Grievances**

For policies and procedures regarding student complaints and grievances, including grade appeals and other academic grievances, please see the [Student Complaint Policy](#) in the Berkeley College Student Handbook 2024-2025.

## Confidentiality

Berkeley College students are required by law to maintain the confidentiality of all patient information encountered at any clinical internship and/or practicum site. While the requirements of patient confidentiality are emphasized throughout the student's coursework, all students are encouraged to visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website (<https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/index.html>) to review the entire Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) policy before beginning the clinical component of the program. In addition to complying with all federal regulations, Berkeley College students must comply with any specific confidentiality requirements, policies, and/or procedures established by the assigned internship and/or clinical site.

A patient's right to confidentiality regarding his or her medical information, which includes confidentiality of personal and social information, is a fundamental healthcare tenet. Accordingly, students must remain mindful of the following basic requirements:

- Patients must not be described in any identifiable way for purposes other than the provision of direct patient care. When discussing experiences involving patients with third parties for legitimate educational purposes, using patient initials, exact descriptions, or locations of patients - either on paper or online - is strictly prohibited. Students are to use generalities only, so that no patient can be clearly recognized.
- While participating in clinical rotation(s) students shall not videotape, photograph, or make audio recordings of themselves, their fellow students, their instructors, or their patients for any reason.
- The public discussion of any patient who is identified by name or whose identity can be derived from other circumstances (or the condition of such patient) without consent violates patient confidentiality and ethical principles. This includes any discussion held in public areas such as elevators, hallways, and cafeterias. It also includes any discussion held in any media forum (such as print media) or any virtual forum (such as websites or social networking sites). Classrooms, pre- and post-conferences, and/or laboratory settings may be used for such discussions, but only for legitimate educational purposes.
- Students should only obtain information about those patients who are assigned to their care for that clinical day. At no time should students use their position in the clinical setting to seek information about a patient other than the patient(s) to whom they have been assigned.
- Copying, scanning, and/or removing any portion of a patient's medical record or printed patient information from the healthcare facility is strictly prohibited.

Social networking has become one of the main sources of communicating in today's world. However, its use can have major legal and ethical implications for healthcare workers with regard to patient privacy and confidentiality. Students must comply at all times with the requirements of the HIPAA and must be especially mindful of patients when using social media. For instance:

- References to patients, patient data, or clinical experiences involving patients or their family members are not to be included in any part of the social networking environment. Social media breaches include, but are not limited to, tweeting confidential or proprietary information about clinical facilities and/or rotations and taking selfies while participating in clinical rotations and posting them on social media sites.
- Students are strictly prohibited from posting any information pertaining to or descriptive of a clinical site, instructor/preceptor, patient, employee, fellow student, or procedure. This includes revealing the location of a clinical site either by posting or by providing content with GPS locator evidence (such as digital photographs).

Students who disclose restricted patient information may face serious consequences. For example, federal law provides for fines up to \$250,000 and imprisonment up to 10 years for misusing protected patient information for commercial advantage or malicious harm. Students found in violation of the Berkeley College Confidentiality Policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate suspension or dismissal from the College. For additional requirements concerning the use of social media in connection with Berkeley College matters, go to [Social Media Policy](#).

## Dress Code

All students in the Medical Assistant program are required to follow the professional appearance code while attending on-campus laboratory classes as well as while at a clinical site participating in the practicum component of the program. A neat, clean, and professional appearance is expected at all times. Working closely with medical equipment, as well as with other staff members, requires that students maintain strict personal hygiene standards. Students will be working on making a lasting impression at the clinical site, and maintaining a professional appearance is an important part of making a good impression.

Failure to adhere to the professional appearance code will result in a warning, and if not corrected, can result in dismissal from the clinical site and possibly the program.

The following are the guidelines of the professional appearance code:

- Hair must be clean. Long hair must be pulled back and cannot fall forward in front of shoulders while providing patient care. Hair accessories must maintain a professional appearance, safety, and hygiene. Hair of an unnatural color or faded designs is not permitted. Avoid highly colored sprays and maintain only natural-looking hair color. Male students must be neatly shaven and well groomed. Facial hair should be kept trimmed and neat.
- No hats or head coverings are permitted; however, exceptions for religious requirements will be made.
- Fingernails must be kept short, clean, and filed. Artificial nails, nail polish, and added stick-on jewels are not permitted as they harbor microorganisms.
- Dangle earrings or other visible body jewelry (nose rings, lip rings, tongue piercing, bracelets, necklaces that can become entangled in equipment) are not permitted.
- Cosmetics should be worn in moderation. Students are not permitted to wear fragrant products (cologne, perfume, aftershave, lotion, etc.) in clinical settings due to potential patient allergic response. Strong odors, including the odor of a smoker, can be apparent and offensive to patients who are ill.
- Wedding rings may be worn. Avoid large stone rings. Rings can cause injury to patients and can also harbor microorganisms. Earrings (one pair) must be small. No other body piercing jewelry is permitted. If a large medal or chain is worn it should be tucked inside the uniform. Students are required to wear a watch with a sweep second hand.
- Unless other facility-specific guidelines are provided, students are required to wear a clean and pressed medical assistant uniform with the Berkeley College insignia. Appropriate undergarments are to be worn and be undetectable through the uniform.
- Shoes must be professional in nature; solid black or white sneakers are permitted. No sandals, flip flops, clogs, open-toed, or slingback shoes are permitted.
- Students are required to wear their Berkeley College IDs at all times while on campus and at the clinical sites. If a student is employed at the same facility, the employment name badge may not be worn during clinical assignments.

## **Informed Consent**

While enrolled in the Medical Assistant program, students will be learning and practicing direct patient care and will be expected to participate in all clinical skill activities, including invasive procedures. Partial disrobing may be required while practicing and performing certain skills. However, appropriate draping and privacy considerations will be maintained at all times.

As an inherent risk of invasive procedures, students may be exposed to hepatitis, HIV, and other bloodborne or airborne pathogens that may cause injury, disease, or death. Students also may be exposed to latex and may develop an allergic reaction, which may cause injury. By participating in the Medical Assistant program, students freely agree to assume and accept any and all known and unknown risks of injury, harm, loss, death, and disease.

If students have religious, cultural, or medical reasons that prevent them from participating in invasive procedures, they are encouraged to speak with the Department Chair and course instructor.

## **Occupational Risk**

Medical assistants work directly with healthcare providers and patients, with the goal of providing care and ensuring patient safety. They can perform both administrative and clinical services, filling several roles in a variety of healthcare environments.

As with any healthcare profession, medical assistants are exposed to certain occupational risks or hazards while performing their duties, including the following:

- Exposure to infectious diseases
- Sharps injuries
- Blood-borne pathogens and biological hazards
- Chemical and drug exposure
- Ergonomic hazards from lifting, sitting, and performing repetitive tasks
- Latex allergies
- Stress

Nevertheless, there are protections set up by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and those protections are particularly important within a healthcare environment. OSHA has a series of standards that protect the safety of healthcare workers and patients.

As an accredited program, Berkeley College's Medical Assistant program educates students about the hazards they face on the job and the protocols that can be put into place to ensure a workplace culture that prioritizes safety.

During their program of study, students enrolled in the Medical Assistant program will be introduced to the Universal Precautions recommended by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(CDC). Students are expected to follow these recommendations in their contact with all clients/patients while in the laboratory and clinical settings that are applicable to New Jersey laws. It is imperative that students follow all established rules and procedures for their protection and the protection of others.

## Professionalism

Students are preparing for membership in a profession that serves the public – a public that expects a high standard of professionalism. While participating in the classroom/laboratory/clinical portion of the program, students are expected to present themselves in a professional manner at all times by demonstrating integrity, respect, and compassion and are expected to be thoughtful and professional when interacting with faculty, staff, patients and their families, healthcare providers, preceptors, affiliated institutional staff, and other students.

It is expected that during the lecture and laboratory portion (as applicable) of their courses, students will:

- Arrive at class on time. Students who anticipate being late must notify their instructor at least 30 minutes prior to the start of class.
- Not disrupt the lecture or laboratory instruction by engaging in private conversations.
- Refrain from eating or drinking while in the laboratory.
- Refrain from inappropriate behavior, such as verbal abuse, anger outbursts, etc.
- Not engage in personal phone conversations or text messaging while participating in the didactic, laboratory, and/or clinical portions of their program. To the extent possible, electronic devices should be turned off or placed in silent mode.

It is expected that during the clinical portion of their courses, students will:

- Uphold school policies and regulations related to academic and clinical performance.
- Refrain from performing any technique or procedure for which they have not been adequately trained.
- Refrain from any deliberate action or omission of care in the academic or clinical setting that creates an unnecessary risk of injury to the client, self, or others.
- Provide care for the client in a timely, compassionate, and professional manner.
- Communicate client care in a truthful, timely, and accurate manner.
- Protect patient privacy, which is governed by HIPAA. Information about patients and/or their circumstances should not appear on social media sites.

If, while enrolled in a clinical course, a student's level of professionalism and/or performance presents potential harm to the welfare of clients, the faculty will determine, based on written and/or oral documentation, whether or not the student will be permitted to continue in the course. If a student's performance presents immediate potential harm to either the student or his/her clients, the program faculty and/or preceptors have the responsibility to remove the student immediately from the clinical setting. A student who recognizes that she/he has made a clinical error is obligated to report the situation to their instructor immediately and to take necessary measures to ensure subsequent patient safety.

In addition, students enrolled in the Medical Assistant program may be suspended, or expelled, from clinical studies for reasons associated with misconduct. These reasons include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Failure to follow Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Guidelines by maintaining the confidentiality of patient information and records.
- An act of dishonesty involving clinical work.
- Falsification of credentials.
- Inappropriate use of electronic devices such as, but not limited to photographing, recording, or transmission of patient information or photographs.

Professional demeanor is also required while students are on virtual sites, such as online social networking sites. All students are expected to abide by the College's Social Media policy.

As members of the healthcare profession, it is imperative that medical assistant students recognize their responsibility to society and their patients and exhibit behavior representing high standards, polite etiquette, compassion, and respect for human dignity in both the classroom and clinical settings.

Professionalism will be a graded component of all core Medical Assistant courses via the completion of the Professional Development Achievement Tool (PDAT). This form is included as part of the course syllabus. Students must achieve 90% or higher on each PDAT form. Those scoring less than 90% on their first PDAT will receive remediation and a verbal warning; scoring less than 90% on two PDATs will result in a written warning; and scoring less than 90% on the third PDAT will result in automatic dismissal from the Program.

Click for more [general conduct requirements](#) applicable to all Berkeley College students.