Frequently Asked Questions about Medical Assisting

Q: How long does it take to complete the Medical Assisting program?
A: It generally takes 9 ½ months to complete the certificate program. It generally takes two years to complete the associate. (Both answers assume no developmental coursework is required and that the student attends full-time.)

Q: What are the Math requirements for the program?
A: Documented proficiency in Math through the 022 (Pre College Math II) level.

Q: How do I gain acceptance into the clinical portion of the program?
A: Refer to Admission Criteria on the web.

Q: When do the Medical Assisting classes start?
A: You can begin taking your general education/prerequisite courses any time. The clinical phase of the program begins each fall.

Q: How many students are accepted into the clinical phase each year?
A: We accept a maximum of 24 students yearly at both Harrisburg and Gettysburg campuses.

Q: Can I become a Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) after I graduate?
A: Yes, our program is CAAHEP accredited and in order to graduate from either the certificate or the associate degree programs students must take the Certified Medical Assisting (CMA AAMA) exam. Failure to pass this exam will not prevent the student from graduating.

Q: Am I required to take the certification exam to get a job as a medical assistant?
A: Legally, credentialing is not a requirement for employment but most employers are now mandating that you be certified as a medical assistant to be employed.

Q: If I move to another state will my certification credential still be valid?
A: Yes, the CMA credential is a national certification that is recognized across the country.

Q: Can I continue on for a bachelor’s degree?
A: Graduates can purse a Bachelor’s degree in Health Care Administration or Management.

Q: Can I work full-time while I’m in the clinical phase of the program?
A: When admitted into the clinical phase of the program, education must become the first priority and working full-time is not recommended. Students are expected to adhere to strict attendance guidelines to complete both the certificate and degree programs.

Q: When and where are MA classes offered?
A: All Medical Assisting lecture and lab courses are held at Gettysburg and Harrisburg campuses.

Q: When and where are MA externships scheduled?
A: An externship (240 hours – usually 6 weeks full-time) is required and scheduled during summer semester. It is arranged by the college in a local physician’s office or clinic during normal daytime business hours Monday through Friday. The college attempts to find a site that is close to the student’s place of residence but there are no guarantees.