



MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS ADVISING GUIDE: *Medical Assisting - Associate Degree and Certificate Program*

Medical Assisting is a multi-skilled allied health profession; practitioners work primarily in ambulatory settings such as medical offices and clinics. Medical assistants function as members of the health care delivery team and perform administrative and clinical procedures under supervision of a physician or licensed nurse.



Administrative duties include basic clerical functions, scheduling and receiving patients, preparing and maintaining medical records, handling telephone calls, processing and writing correspondence, serving as a liaison between the physician and other individuals, and managing practice finances.

Clinical duties include asepsis and infection control, taking patient histories and vital signs, performing first aid and CPR, preparing patients for procedures, assisting the physician with examinations and treatments, collecting and processing specimens, performing selected diagnostic. This advising guide includes information that will help you to explore your academic and career interests and determine whether the **Medical Assisting program** will support your long term goals.



EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS WITH ACADEMIC ADVISING

Throughout each semester, meet with your advisor so that he/she can guide you through a self-exploration process that will help you identify your academic and career interests.

Beginning of Semester:

___ Schedule an appointment to meet with your academic advisor during the first few weeks to discuss future plans and how a Medical Assisting Degree or Certificate can help you achieve your goals.

___ Explore your personal interests by completing Focus2, an online career assessment tool:
<https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices/focus2.aspx>

Mid-Semester:

___ Schedule an appointment with academic advisor review your academic progress, Focus2 results and create an academic plan in Degree Works.

Before Semester Ends:

___ Schedule an appointment to discuss and register for the classes you will take the following semester.
(Early November for spring, Early April for fall and summer)

___ Visit the Academic Career & Transfer Center or call 1-800-818-3434 to schedule an appointment.

► INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- Exploring Your Options
- Personality Inventory
- Career Path
- Transfer Path

MEDICAL ASSISTING PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Graduates of the program are prepared to:

- Use the knowledge and skills of the profession in order to function effectively as an entry-level medical assistant;
- Understand, interpret and analyze knowledge, particularly related to current scientific and medical practice and the medical assisting profession;



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MEDICAL ASSISTING PROGRAM OUTCOMES (CONT.)

- Communicate verbally and in writing with patients and colleagues, to produce medical reports and error-free letters, to utilize technology to record clinical, financial and demographic data, to calculate account balances and to find and evaluate appropriate scientific information related to current medical practice;
- View historical, scientific, medical and aesthetic phenomena from a global perspective;
- Demonstrate empathy and caring for diverse populations, to maintain patient confidentiality as required by federal HIPAA regulations, and to practice within the ethical and legal guidelines appropriate for the profession of medical assisting;
- Be professionally and personally accountable, to work effectively with others, to adapt to change and to plan for life-long learning



MEDICAL ASSISTANT SELF-EXPLORATION ACTIVITY (WOULD I MAKE A GOOD MEDICAL ASSISTANT?):

Answer True:

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. I enjoy helping people | ___ True |
| 2. I am very organized | ___ True |
| 3. I like working in groups or on group projects | ___ True |
| 4. I am very patient | ___ True |
| 5. I like reading and learning about new things | ___ True |
| 6. I do well in my science and math classes | ___ True |
| 7. I am comfortable doing several things at the same time | ___ True |
| 8. I enjoy being around people with different backgrounds and beliefs than my own | ___ True |
| 9. I always follow through on my commitments | ___ True |
| 10. I enjoy working with others to solve problems | ___ True |

Answer False:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 11. I am often late to class or for appointments | ___ False |
| 12. Having two assignments due on the same day stresses me out | ___ False |
| 13. I tend to get stressed when people around me are stressed | ___ False |
| 14. I often have trouble organizing my thoughts when I need to write a paper. | ___ False |
| 15. I do better on essay and open book tests than on multiple choice timed exams | ___ False |
| 16. If people are rude to me, I think it OK to be rude back to them | ___ False |
| 17. Once I make up my mind, it is difficult to change my opinion | ___ False |
| 18. I like to work on one project at a time | ___ False |
| 19. I prefer to work alone | ___ False |
| 20. I get queasy when I see blood or body fluids such as throw-up or diarrhea | ___ False |

Alternate questions: 1 point for answering “true” on the “true” questions; 1 point for answering “false” on the “false” questions. **12-20 points:** You have the personality to make a good medical assistant; medical assistant could be a good career choice for you. **0-11 points:** Medical Assisting may not be a good fit for you. You may want to explore other career options.

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IS THE MEDICAL ASSISTING PROGRAM THE RIGHT FIT FOR ME?

Often people have limited information about what it really takes to be a Medical Assistant. We believe that Medical Assisting is an exciting, rewarding career for Health Care Professionals. The clinical, administrative, and trans-disciplinary skills possessed by Medical Assistants make them one of the most valuable, versatile workers in the Health Care market today. Medical Assistants need good critical thinking skills and well-developed organizational skills in order to meet multiple demands in a stressful environment. Consider whether you have the following personality traits and abilities.

■ **Ability to work with others:**

Do you like to help others? Are you the type of person who can maintain a calm attitude in the face of another person's anxiety? Can you keep a smile on your face and a tone of judgment out of your voice? Medical Assistants take care of people who may be experiencing pain and/or stress and are not always at their best. Medical Assistants must be outgoing, warm and caring, and able to put the needs of others first. Good communication skills and being an empathetic listener are important skills for a Medical Assistant.

■ **Ability to act honestly and with integrity:**

Are you able to be selfless instead of selfish? Are you willing to admit when you have made a mistake and assume responsibility? A Medical Assistant projects honesty by working within his or her "scope of practice"; that is, doing only what he or she is trained to do and being comfortable in saying "I don't know" or "I don't know how to" when appropriate. If you are able act honestly and with integrity, Medical Assisting may be a good profession for you.

■ **Ability to multi-task:**

Are you able to work on two different projects at the same time? If you can multi-task, you might make a good Medical Assistant. Medical Assistants need the ability to handle many different tasks during the day; they may get interrupted while with a patient to help the physician or to perform administrative or clinical tasks.

■ **Ability to show initiative:**

Do you have the ability to work independently? A person with initiative is observant, notices work that needs to be done, and takes action to complete those tasks without being told to do them. The successful Medical Assistant will be ready to pitch in and recognize when others need assistance.

■ **Ability to work as part of a team:**

Have you ever been part of a sports team? Can you work on group projects in school, even if you don't necessarily like all the people you are working with? Medical Assistants never work alone. They work as part of a healthcare team that involves physicians, nurses, other medical assistants and individuals from many different professions. You may not ever be "BFFs" with everyone on your team, but a good medical assistant is able to develop good teamwork strategies to provide quality care and meet established goals.



IS THE MEDICAL ASSISTING PROGRAM THE RIGHT FIT FOR ME? (CONT.)

■ Ability to stay organized and work under pressure:

Are you constantly searching through your book bag to find your homework assignment? Do you miss deadlines when you are doing your schoolwork? Do you always have an excuse when you are late to work? If this sounds like you, you may have to work on developing your organizational and time management skills before you can work as a Medical Assistant. The ability to organize and prioritize are skills that you can practice and improve. But if you don't want to learn these skills, you will not make a good Medical Assistant.

■ Physical Demands:

- Record patient history, vital signs and other information.
- Assist patients to assume various positions for examination, to get dressed, to get on and off exam table.
- Move/operate patient conveyance devices and equipment such as stretchers, wheelchairs and monitors.
- Respond appropriately to sounds, i.e. patient voice, movements and distress behaviors at a normal conversational volume.
- Manipulate dials, levers, keyboard devices, plugs and other switches/devices associated with medical equipment and office procedures.
- Lift and carry twenty pounds of weight for a short distance.
- Respond to directions and requests in conversation, by telephone or other electronic communication devices.
- Differentiate colors and shades on dipsticks and compare them to charts.
- Use a microscope.
- Perform electrocardiograms.
- Manipulate syringes, needles and other invasive devices.
- Read small print (e.g., example on tubes, vials, package inserts, etc.)
- Palpate pulses and veins to perform venipuncture.
- Wear personal protective equipment, such as surgical gloves, goggles and face shields.
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills in computer literacy, information literacy, and the use of information technologies.

Medical Assisting Career: <http://www.aama-ntl.org/resources/library/07MACareer.pdf>

Occupational analysis of the CMA: <http://www.aama-ntl.org/resources/library/OA.pdf>



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THE CAREER PATH

Graduates are ready for entry-level employment in various outpatient settings, including hospital clinics, group and individual physicians' practices, chiropractor and podiatrist offices.

Many graduates of the certificate program return to Middlesex and apply all the credits previously earned to the associate degree. Department of Labor, job prospects for medical assistants are excellent since medical assisting is predicted to be one of the nation's fastest growing occupations through 2018.

Career Planning Activities:

- ___ Work with advisor to discuss *MassTransfer*, Articulations and transfer agreements
- ___ Visit your selected campuses in person. Every college looks good online or in a glossy photo, but you can get a better feel when you visit
- ___ Meet with transfer counselor to identify transfer scholarships
- ___ Research admissions requirements and deadlines at 4-year colleges and universities



THE TRANSFER PATH

The Medical Assisting Associate in Science degree program is a completion program for students who have completed a Certificate in Medical Assisting. Only students who have already completed the certificate will be accepted for this degree program. Program Requirements: Total Credits: 60-62.

Transfer Planning Activities:

- ___ Work with Advisor to discuss *MassTransfer*, articulations and transfer agreements
- ___ Visit your selected campus in person. Every college looks good online or in a glossy photo but you can get a better feel when you visit
- ___ Meet with transfer counselor to identify transfer scholarships
- ___ Research admissions requirements and deadlines at 4-year colleges and universities

MCC ADVISING RESOURCES

Career Services:

<https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices>

Transfer Services:

<https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/transfer>

MassTransfer:

<https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/transfer/masstransfer.aspx>

Financial Aid:

<https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/financialaid>

Foundation Scholarships:

<https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/foundation/scholarships>

College Board Match Maker:

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>