



## Learn How to Become a Certified Medical Assistant in 5 Easy Steps

### Description

If you are service-oriented, adaptable, and committed to patient care, a job as a certified medical assistant may be a good fit for you.



To become a medical assistant, you can pick from various training programs, including on-the-job training, online training, on-campus training, and even a medical assistant program that incorporates all of these features.

Here are the steps you can take to become a certified medical assistant if you are interested in locating a certificate program.

## How to Become a Certified Medical Assistant in 5 Easy Steps

1. Complete Required Training
2. Register for and Study for the Certification Exam

3. Pass the Certified Management Accountant Exam

4. Achieve Success in Your Job Interview

5. Maintain Your Momentum

Although it is possible to become a medical assistant with only a high school diploma or GED and suitable on-the-job training, most companies prefer to recruit medical assistants who have already received formal training and certification from a recognized program.

Finding a physician ready to recruit an uneducated and inexperienced medical assistant might be challenging.

According to some estimates, becoming qualified also often secures a higher pay grade – up to \$12,000 more than a non-trained medical assistant.

The certification procedure shows employers that you've been tested and demonstrated the abilities and knowledge they seek for their patients.

#### Job Description for a Medical Assistant

A medical assistant assists physicians, nurses, patients, and other health care team members.

Medical assistants do a wide range of critical activities, some of which are more administrative in nature and others of which entail direct patient contact.

Answering phones, organizing appointments, updating patients' medical records, making insurance requests, and coordinating hospital intake or laboratory tests are all examples of administrative activities.

Electronic medical data administration, in particular, is becoming an increasingly important component of medical assistant activities.

More clinical responsibilities may include:

- Drawing blood or removing sutures.
- Supporting physicians during exams.
- Taking medical histories.
- Assisting patients in preparing for the exam.

Furthermore, most medical assistants will be able to take vital signs.

Often, a medical assistant is the first person a patient encounters inside a medical office – and certain medical assistants may also deliver injections or prescriptions under the supervision of a physician, as permitted by state law.

A certified medical assistant may also aid with prescription writing and adjustments and minor outpatient clinical procedures.

Overall, the forecast for medical assistant positions is good, as the aging baby boomer generation continues to boost the need for medical support.

Because of the physician shortage, medical assistants will have greater chances to handle basic clinical and administrative functions.

Indeed, the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that more than 160,000 new opportunities for medical assistants will be available across the country between 2012 and 2022, representing a substantially faster than average pace of employment growth.

Most medical assistants work in primary care, which is a rapidly developing segment of the medical sector.

A successful medical office assistant will have the following characteristics, according to the US Department of Labor: communication skills, the ability to work well under pressure, attention to detail, customer service ability, listening skills, knowledge of medical terminology, clerical skills, knowledge of medical treatment, and more.

In general, a licensed medical assistant starting should expect to make roughly \$40,000 at the start of their career.

How to Become a Certified Medical Assistant in 5 Easy Steps

While certification is not always required for medical assistant professions, it is highly encouraged and requested.

Here are the steps you can take to become a certified medical assistant.

## 1. Complete Required Training

Before taking your certification exam, you must first finish training through a recognized school, which might be challenging to find.

Look for programs the Commission has approved on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs or the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools.

The medical assistant certification procedure usually takes around a year or less.

You should consider how you want your medical profession to progress to select the appropriate type of medical assistant training.

For example, if you eventually want to work in another healthcare field, you might wish to get an associate's or bachelor's degree before taking your exam.

This lays the groundwork for future research.

However, if you want to enter the workforce quickly, you might pick a different type of certificate program that is more streamlined.

Certificates can be obtained at technical or vocational schools and online.

There are even hybrid programs that combine classroom and online learning.

Consider the types of courses available as well – while most medical assistants perform a wide range of jobs, some programs allow you to specialize in a single area, such as administration or patient care.

The administrative specialty will involve medical billing, insurance, and general customer service coursework, whereas a patient care field of study will stress skills such as medical terminology, EKG, anatomy, and phlebotomy.

You can also choose to specialize in a specific discipline, such as ophthalmology, obstetrics, or podiatry.

To gain clinical experience, most training programs will involve some form of training or externship.

If you can take the burden, you might also look for an entry-level position to help you gain clinical experience while you study.

Look for jobs in doctor's offices, clinics, and hospitals.

## **2. Register for and Study for the Certification Exam**

Before taking your exam, you must apply to the proper accrediting authority.

You must demonstrate that you have completed the necessary training and have all the essential papers.

You will most likely be allowed to choose the date for your exam during this phase. Allow plenty of time to study for your certification exam; even with proper training, the test is difficult.

However, there are numerous possibilities for guided test preparation.

A variety of professional organizations provide exam preparation programs, and the American Association of Medical Assistants even offers a CMA practice exam you can take to measure your readiness.

These programs can enhance your past practice and focus your efforts on the most critical aspects of passing the exam.

## **3. Complete the CMA Certification Exam**

While most states do not require certification to work as a medical assistant, it is recommended by most companies.

In terms of accrediting agencies and the tests they provide, you have various possibilities.

For example, the National Center for Competency Testing offers the National Certified Medical Assistant exam.

Every year, the American Association of Medical Assistants administers the Certified Medical Assistants exam in January, June, and October.

The National Health Career Association now offers a Certified Clinical Medical Assistant certificate and a Certified Medical Administrative Assistant certification.

Whatever test you take, make sure you're familiar with the testing center you'll be using, including its test-taking procedures, as well as what to bring and what to expect on the day of your exam.

In most cases, you'll receive an initial pass/fail notice as soon as you complete your exam, with your formal results arriving in the mail three to four weeks later.

## **4. Achieve Success in Your Job Interview**

Once you've obtained your certification, you'll be in a good position to land an interview with a physician's office and begin working.

Make sure to thoroughly investigate the facility and team you're interviewing with. Prepare responses to questions that highlight your abilities, knowledge of the medical field, and how well you'll fit into the team's culture.

Also, bring your questions that demonstrate your interest in both the profession and the individual post.

## **5. Maintain Your Momentum**

Don't let gaining your first medical assistant position be the end of your career; once you've taken this step, search for opportunities to advance your career.

For example, you may later decide to return to school to broaden your job prospects.

If you acquire an associate degree first, you may elect to pursue a bachelor's degree afterward.

You can also choose to broaden your choices as a medical assistant by being certified in additional areas such as office programs, pharmaceuticals, phlebotomy, and others.

Medical Supplies Required for a Medical Assistant

In their daily work, certified medical assistants must successfully operate a wide range of medical equipment.

A medical assistant in primary care or another clinical environment, for example, may employ any of the following:

- Thermometer
- Examine lights
- Machine for electrocardiograms
- Scale
- Hemoglobin analyzer
- Autoclave\Computer
- Ultrasound device
- Stethoscope
- Sphygmomanometer
- Ophthalmoscope
- Syringes
- Biohazard
- Sharps
- Containers
- Glucometers
- Otoscopes
- Penlights
- Hearing aids
- Forceps, scalpels, and other surgical implements

Finally, the types of medical tools required by a certified medical assistant will be determined by the kind of office setting and the office equipment preferred by the health care professionals.

Some equipment, such as EKG machines, computers, X-ray machines, and scales, will be provided by the employer, while other, more personal items, such as a stethoscope, penlights, and so on, may need to be acquired individually by the medical assistant.

In general, the medical facility will supply the primary medical equipment, however, the minor tools of the trade that a medical assistant may need to carry throughout the day may need to be acquired separately by the specific medical assistant.

Furthermore, clinical medical assistants must be knowledgeable about infection control; most medical offices utilize standardized sterilization solutions such as Hibiclens or Cavicide to ensure that their clinical environments are pathogen-free for the protection of patients and the medical team.

Once employed by a specific medical practice, you will most likely receive any necessary training on that medical team's specialized equipment.

## How to Become a Certified Medical Assistant

If you want to be a certified medical assistant, you've made a solid decision: medical assistant jobs are among the most desirable in the healthcare profession, and good medical assistants are in high demand.

Medical assistants are essential and respected members of the healthcare team.

Working as a licensed medical assistant can provide good income and benefits, job security, and future employment opportunities.

While certification is not needed in most jurisdictions, it is generally recommended in the healthcare industry.

The certification procedure is manageable, especially when weighed against the rewards.

If you decide to pursue medical assistant certification, follow the steps outlined here, and you'll be well on your way to a lucrative and exciting job in the medical field.

USA Medical and Surgical Supply contributed content.

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1. Education

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