

“Competency-based format” has three components: (1) the specific task to be mastered; (2) the conditions under which the student is expected to perform the task; and (3) the standard of performance for the task.

1. Content

To provide for student attainment of the Entry-Level Competencies for the Medical Assistant, the curriculum must include, as a minimum:

a. Anatomy and Physiology

- (1) Anatomy and physiology of all body systems
- (2) Common pathology/diseases
- (3) Diagnostic/treatment modalities

b. Medical Terminology

- (1) Basic structure of medical words
- (2) Word building and definitions
- (3) Applications of medical terminology

c. Medical Law and Ethics

- (1) Legal guidelines/requirements for health care
- (2) Medical ethics and related issues

d. Psychology

- (1) Basic principles
- (2) Developmental stages of the life cycle
- (3) Hereditary, cultural and environmental influences on behavior

e. Communication

- (1) Principles of verbal and nonverbal communication
- (2) Recognition and response to verbal and nonverbal communication
- (3) Adaptations for individualized needs
- (4) Applications of electronic technology
- (5) Fundamental writing skills

f. Medical Assisting Administrative Procedures

- (1) Basic medical assisting clerical functions
- (2) Bookkeeping principles
- (3) Insurance, procedural and diagnostic coding
- (4) Operational functions

g. Medical Assisting Clinical Procedures

- (1) Asepsis and infection control
- (2) Specimen collection and processing
- (3) Diagnostic testing
- (4) Patient care and instruction
- (5) Pharmacology
- (6) Medical emergencies
- (7) Principles of IV Therapy

h. Professional Components

- (1) Personal attributes
- (2) Job readiness
- (3) Workplace dynamics
- (4) Allied health professions and credentialing
- (5) Provider level CPR certification and first aid training

This content may be integrated throughout the curriculum or as separate courses/modules. Instructional strategies should promote achievement of performance objectives of administrative, clinical and general competencies. Instructional strategies may include classroom lecture presentations, demonstrations, research, discussions, role-playing, simulations, and supervised classroom practice, and should encompass all phases of the life cycle: pediatric, adult and geriatric.

2. Externship

A supervised, unpaid externship of at least 160 contact hours in an ambulatory health care setting performing administrative and clinical procedures must be completed prior to graduation.

The program should ensure that the externship experience and instruction of students are meaningful and parallel in content and concept with the material presented in lecture and laboratory sessions. Sites should be selected so that each student is afforded a variety of experiences, while at the same time all students are provided consistent learning opportunities.

3. Competencies

The Entry-Level Competencies for the medical assistant include, but are not limited to:

a. Administrative Competencies:

(1) Perform Clerical Functions

- (a) Schedule and manage appointments
- (b) Schedule inpatient and outpatient admissions and procedures
- (c) Organize a patient's medical record
- (d) File medical records

(2) Perform Bookkeeping Procedures

- (a) Prepare a bank deposit
- (b) Post entries on a daysheet
- (c) Perform accounts receivable procedures
- (d) Perform billing and collection procedures
- (e) Post adjustments
- (f) Process credit balance
- (g) Process refunds
- (h) Post NSF checks
- (i) Post collection agency payments

(3) Process Insurance Claims

- (a) Apply managed care policies and procedures
- (b) Apply third party guidelines
- (c) Perform procedural coding
- (d) Perform diagnostic coding
- (e) Complete insurance claim forms

b. Clinical Competencies:

(1) Fundamental Procedures

- (a) Perform handwashing
- (b) Wrap items for autoclaving
- (c) Perform sterilization techniques
- (d) Dispose of biohazardous materials
- (e) Practice Standard Precautions

(2) Specimen Collection

- (a) Perform venipuncture
- (b) Perform capillary puncture

- (c) Obtain specimens for microbiological testing
- (d) Instruct patients in the collection of a clean-catch mid-stream urine specimen
- (e) Instruct patients in the collection of fecal specimens

(3) Diagnostic Testing

- (a) Perform electrocardiography
- (b) Perform respiratory testing
- (c) CLIA Waived Tests:
 - (i) Perform urinalysis
 - (ii) Perform hematology testing
 - (iii) Perform chemistry testing
 - (iv) Perform immunology testing
 - (v) Perform microbiology testing

(4) Patient Care

- (a) Perform telephone and in-person screening
- (b) Obtain vital signs
- (c) Obtain and record patient history
- (d) Prepare and maintain examination and treatment areas
- (e) Prepare patient for and assist with routine and specialty examinations
- (f) Prepare patient for and assist with procedures, treatments, and minor office surgeries
- (g) Apply pharmacology principles to prepare and administer oral and parenteral (excluding IV) medications
- (h) Maintain medication and immunization records
- (i) Screen and follow-up test results

c. General Competencies

(1) Professional Communications

- (a) Respond to and initiate written communications
- (b) Recognize and respond to verbal communications
- (c) Recognize and respond to nonverbal communications
- (d) Demonstrate telephone techniques

(2) Legal Concepts

- (a) Identify and respond to issues of confidentiality
- (b) Perform within legal and ethical boundaries
- (c) Establish and maintain the medical record
- (e) Document appropriately
- (f) Demonstrate knowledge of federal and state health care legislation and regulations

(3) Patient Instruction

- (a) Explain general office policies
- (b) Instruct individuals according to their needs
- (c) Provide instruction for health maintenance and disease prevention
- (d) Identify community resources

(4) Operational Functions

- (a) Perform an inventory of supplies and equipment
- (b) Perform routine maintenance of administrative and clinical equipment
- (c) Utilize computer software to maintain office systems
- (d) Use methods of quality control

General Competencies may be addressed in clinical, administrative or both areas.