

SUNY Niagara
Nursing, Physical & Allied Health

Medical Assistant Program

Student Handbook
2025 - 2026

3111 Saunders Settlement Road, Sanborn, NY 14132
716-614-6222

Welcome to the Medical Assistant AAS Degree Program!

We are pleased that you have taken the steps towards an exciting career as an allied health medical professional. We hope you are excited to get started and realize you may be experiencing some anxiety or nervousness about what to expect during your academic program.

The medical assistant handbook can answer questions and may help ease some of your worries. It contains Medical Assistant program policies and procedures and can provide answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) specific to the program at SUNY Niagara. It provides guidance about being a Medical Assistant student, resources for success, and relevant information as you endeavor to become a healthcare professional. Please read the information and ask questions. Please keep this handbook for reference during all your time in the program.

Your success in the Medical Assistant Program is extremely important to all of the SUNY Niagara faculty, administration, and staff. We are here to advise you, answer questions, address concerns that may arise, and support you while you are here as a student.

Thank you for choosing SUNY Niagara. We look forward to teaching you. In addition, we sincerely hope your experiences at SUNY Niagara are healthy, happy, and prosperous!

Sincerely,

The Medical Assistant Faculty and Staff

Introduction

We believe that the medical assistant profession is an important and rewarding allied health career path. The clinical, administrative, and inter-disciplinary skills possessed by medical assistants make them valuable and useful workers in today's dynamic health and wellness-care environment. As an accredited program, we believe that medical assistants are best suited in the operation and management of the ambulatory/outpatient medical setting.

The SUNY Niagara Medical Assistant curriculum and its program of study meets the educational requirements by the Board of Regents in New York State to award an Associate in Applied Science Degree (AAS). Graduates are eligible to take a national certification exam in medical assistant. Other states may have different educational requirements for program completion and professional credentialing requirements. SUNY Niagara has not made a determination of whether the curriculum meets the educational requirements for medical assistants in states other than in New York. If seeking certification/licensure in a state other than New York, please review the requirements of that State's Board of Professional Licensing/Credentialing. To search a particular State's Scope of Practice and professional credentialing information go to: <https://www.aama-ntl.org/employers/state-scope-of-practice-laws>

Handbook Overview

Students have a right to know program and faculty expectations and have a responsibility to uphold those expectations. The purpose of this handbook is to provide information about Program specific policies and procedures, as well as to supplement information found in the *SUNY Niagara College Catalog* and, *The Student Rights & Responsibilities, Code of Conduct*. Information related to advisement, registration, financial aid and specific program course requirements are not repeated in this publication please seek specific information from each individual department. Course syllabi distributed at the beginning of each semester contain grading policy, course objectives, and requirements for course completion. Students are responsible to know and observe College policies, rules and regulations.

SUNY Niagara Mission & Vision

Mission Statement

SUNY Niagara provides flexible teaching and learning environments dedicated to educational excellence and committed to our core values of student centeredness, accessibility, comprehensiveness, collegiality, community partnership, and lifelong learning. Through the liberal arts and sciences as a key component of all academic programs, our College nurtures and empowers students to recognize and to value our common humanity as well as the richness of our diversity. SUNY Niagara offers quality academic programs while providing supportive student and academic services. To produce engaged citizens, SUNY Niagara provides cultural, social, recreational, athletic, and global experiences. SUNY Niagara is a major contributor to economic development through transfer, career and technical education, workforce development, and continuing education. To demonstrate integrity and accountability, SUNY Niagara operates through a collegial model of shared governance, which provides for a comprehensive assessment of all aspects of institutional effectiveness.

Vision

SUNY Niagara will be a leader in providing a dynamic, high-quality educational environment responsive to current and emerging needs of our students and community.

Accreditation

SUNY Niagara Institutional Accreditation – SUNY Niagara is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Middle States Commission on Higher Education 1007 North Orange Street 4th Floor, MB #166 Wilmington, DE 19801 (The college's curricula are registered with the University of the State of New York (State Education Department) and approved by SUNY. All curricula are approved for the education of veterans under Public Law 634 (Children of Deceased Veterans) and Public Law 89-358 (Veterans Administration Readjustment Benefits Act of 1966).

SUNY Niagara Medical Assistant Program Accreditation – The Medical Assistant AAS program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) (<http://www.caahep.org>) upon the recommendation of the Medical Assisting Education Review Board (MAERB). Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs, 25400 US Highway, 19 North, Suite 158, Clearwater, FL 33763, (727) 210-2350

Accreditation Descriptions

MSCHE – Middle States Commission on Higher Education

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education is a voluntary, non-governmental, regional membership association currently serving higher education institutions in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and other geographic areas in which the Commission conducts accrediting activities.

CAAHEP – Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs – 25400 US Highway, 19 North, Suite 158, Clearwater, FL 33763, (727) 210-2350

The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) is a programmatic postsecondary accrediting agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and carries out its accrediting activities in cooperation with 23 review Committees on Accreditation. CAAHEP currently accredits more than 2100 entry level education programs in 30 health science professions. The CAAHEP Board of Directors is composed of 16 members, who are elected by and from those serving as Commissioners. The Board is the accrediting body of CAAHEP that awards or denies accreditation after review of accreditation recommendations made by the Committees on Accreditation.

The curricula of accredited programs must ensure achievement of the Entry-Level Competencies for the Medical Assistant. The curriculum must include anatomy and physiology, medical terminology, medical law and ethics, psychology, communications (oral and written), medical assisting administrative procedures, and medical assisting clinical procedures. Programs must include an externship that provides practical experience in qualified physicians' offices, accredited hospitals, or other health care facilities.

MAERB – Medical Assisting Education Review Board – 2339 N. California Ave., #47138, Chicago, IL 60647, 312-392-0155 <http://www.maerb.org>

The Medical Assisting Education Review Board is a Committee on Accreditation (CoA) of the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). The American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) is a sponsoring organization of MAERB. MAERB makes accreditation recommendations for the status of accreditation of medical assisting programs.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

SUNY Niagara Medical Assistant Program Goals and Objectives

Medical Assistant Program Mission – The mission of the SUNY Niagara Medical Assistant program is to give students the educational means to become academically, clinically, and administratively competent in the profession of Medical Assistant.

Program Goal Statement – Upon successful completion of the SUNY Niagara Medical Assistant program, graduates will demonstrate employment-ready proficiency in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains set forth by programmatic accreditation standards and guidelines necessary to function as a knowledgeable and competent entry-level medical assistant.

Program Goals

1. Graduate quality entry-level professionals into the field of Medical Assistant.
2. To prepare medical assistants who are competent in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains to enter the profession.
3. Prepare students to sit for a nationally recognized Medical Assistant exam and become a certified medical assistant per accreditation standards.

Program Core Values – Knowledge, Competence, Respect, Safety, Confidentiality

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

Upon successful completion of the SUNY Niagara Medical Assistant program, graduates will be able to:

1. Perform clinical tasks such as vital signs, exam room preparation, patient data collection, CLIA-waived lab tests, phlebotomy, and EKG's.
2. Perform administrative tasks such as reception, data-entry, insurance billing and coding procedures, record and basic office management.
3. Demonstrate the knowledge skills and behaviors necessary to function within the legal and ethical standards of the profession of Medical Assistant.
4. Demonstrate appropriate communication skills using both the written and spoken word.
5. Demonstrate proficient critical thinking skills.
6. Demonstrate appropriate communication and professional interaction with providers, supervisors, and professional colleagues utilizing effective interpersonal skills.
7. Assist provider with patient education related to pharmacology, disease prevention, and nutrition within the legal and ethical standards of the profession of Medical Assistant.
8. Demonstrate an appreciation and awareness of varied perspectives necessary to meet the needs of diverse populations.
9. Discuss the value of lifelong learning, professional development, and active membership in professional societies.

Medical Assistant AAS Degree Requirements



SUNY NIAGARA Medical Assistant, A.A.S.

Overview

Medical Assistants are multi-skilled allied health professionals who perform a wide range of roles in physicians' offices, clinics, hospitals, HMOs, medical insurance agencies, and other healthcare settings. They are cross-trained and proficient in a multitude of administrative and clinical duties. Their versatility makes them employable and they are viewed by providers as vital members of the healthcare delivery team.

Careers

Careers related to your program of study:

- Medical Assistant

Contact

Program Coordinator
Lindsey Bax, MS, CMA (AAMA)
716-614-5938
lbax@niagaracc.suny.edu

Division

Nursing, Physical & Allied Health
716-614-5940

Visit full catalog for specific program policies and course offerings for each semester:

www.niagaracc.suny.edu/programs/meda

Accreditations

The Niagara County Community College Medical Assistant Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (www.caahep.org) upon the recommendation of the Medical Assisting Education Review Board (MAERB).

Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs• 25400 US Highway• 19 North, Suite 158
Clearwater, FL 33763, (727) 210-2350 www.caahep.org

Program Requirements

First Semester

	Credits
BIO 213 - Human Anatomy and Physiology I	4
BIO 213L - Human Anatomy and Physiology I Lab	
ENG 101 - Writing I	3
MED 101 - OSHA/CLIA Regulations	1
MED 102 - Patient Communication	1
MED 134 - Medical Terminology	3
MED 135 - Medical Ethics	
MAT ----- Mathematics & Quantitative Reasoning (MATH)	
General Education	3
Total Credit Hours:	17 Cr.

Second Semester

BIO 214 - Human Anatomy and Physiology II	4
BIO 214L - Human Anatomy and Physiology Lab II	1
-----Communication - Oral (COMO) General Education elective	3
MED 160 - Basic Patient Care	2
MED 261L - Basic Patient Care I Lab	
MED 230 - Medical Coding, Billing and Insurance	3
Total Credit Hours:	14 Cr.

Third Semester

BIO 221 - Microbiology	4
BIO 221L - Microbiology Lab	0
HED 214 - Advanced First Aid and CPR	2
MED 103L - Phlebotomy Lab	
MED 104L - Basic ECG for Medical Assistants	
MED 132 - Medical Records Management	2
MED 153 - Medical Office Procedures	3
MED 162 - Basic Patient Care II	2
MED 262L - Basic Patient Care II Lab	0
MED 210 - Introduction to Medical Informatics	3
Total Credit Hours:	18 Cr.

Fourth Semester

BIO 240 - Biotechniques	4
BIO 240L - Biotechniques Lab	0
MED 137 - Medical Assistant Externship I	3
MED 139 - Medical Office Communications	2
PHA 250 - General Pharmacology	3
SOC 101 - Introduction to Sociology	3
Total Credit Hours:	15 Cr.

The information provided is subject to change throughout the academic year.

Required Course Work, Proper Course Sequencing and Minimum Grade Requirements

The Medical Assistant Program is CAAHEP accredited and provides competency-based education. The program abides by the current Standards and Guidelines for Medical Assisting Educational Programs set forth by CAAHEP and the Medical Assisting Education Review Board (MAERB). (2022)

The SUNY Niagara Medical Assistant Program strives to meet all guidelines and regulations set forth by CAAHEP and MAERB. MAERB standards, entry-level competencies, role delineation, and CMA (AAMA), NCMA (NCCT), and RMA (AMT) exam content outlines can be made available to each student. The MAERB competencies and SUNY Niagara outcomes for each course are identified on the course syllabus given to the student on the first day of the class.

Courses required in the Medical Assistant Program were chosen to meet various academic standards, fulfill accreditation requirements, and to ensure our graduates are prepared to work as medical assistants. We work diligently to maintain our accreditation. Course work in the program is structured to comply with latest available standards, guidelines, and interpretation set forth by the CAAHEP and MAERB.

The Medical Assisting (MA) curriculum is sequenced to provide the student with the best possible learning experience. Students who do not complete proper class sequence each term are at a great disadvantage. Core content, clinical and administrative courses, have pre-requisites and co-requisites that must be completed before advancing to the next level.

MAERB Cognitive Objectives, Psychomotor & Affective Competencies

Individuals graduating from Medical Assisting programs accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) must demonstrate knowledge of the subject matters required for competence in the profession. They must incorporate the cognitive (C) knowledge in performance of the psychomotor (P) and affective (A) competencies required in the following academic subjects.

The goal of the educator is to assure student competency prior to externship/practicum placement. Competencies and course work are structured to comply with the latest available analyses provided by CAAHEP, MAERB, the SUNY Niagara Advisory Committee suggestions, and employment trends. Students are expected to demonstrate safe and responsible medical assisting skills by completing all competencies at a satisfactory level. The student will be required to demonstrate safe and responsible skills prior to externship/practicum placement. All MED cognitive objectives must be completed with an average grade of C (73%) or higher to progress to the next level and for graduation. A minimum standard of 85% on 100% of required psychomotor and affective competencies is required to pass critical clinical and administrative competencies and the course each competency is contained in successfully, as stated in the student syllabus. Only two attempts per psychomotor/affective competency is allowed.

MAERB Trigger Course Statement

MED 160 Basic Patient Care is the identified SUNY Niagara MAERB CAAHEP Trigger Course for Medical Assistant majors. Students must successfully pass MED 160 to progress forward in the Medical Assistant program. Failure to successfully complete MED 160 prevents students from taking any MED courses past the Trigger Course semester and until MED 160 is completed successfully according to program policy and procedures.

“The trigger course is the first course in the medical assisting program curriculum in which the student is taught and achievement measured on any psychomotor and/or affective competencies within the MAERB core curriculum. The formal admission cohort will be the group of students who have successfully completed the trigger course. If any of the psychomotor and/or affective competencies are taught and achievement measured in other courses outside of medical assisting courses prior to the start of that trigger course, the competencies must be re-assessed and/or re-evaluated during the progression of the MAERB core curriculum prior to practicum.”

Competencies (Return Demonstration) – Psychomotor & Affective

- Students will be given time in class to practice skills prior to demonstrating the skill to the instructor. If a student is absent during class practice time, arrangements need to be made to practice during open lab time. The evaluation of each competency is treated as though the student is performing the skill on a patient/client in the medical setting. Therefore, part of each competency will include professionalism, proper attire/grooming, and accurate documentation where appropriate to simulate required charting in the healthcare setting. The Evaluation Schedule will be posted prior to evaluation day.
- Competency assessment may be conducted by any one of the clinical faculty within the medical assisting program according to the competency check-off criteria.
- Competencies not turned in/completed by due date will be a **failed** competency and are calculated equally to in-class practical's.
- Students are allowed a maximum of two (2) attempts of each skill evaluation to pass at a minimum of 85%. Failure to complete one or more competencies with a passing score of 85% will result in a failing grade for the course.
- If a competency is completed as part of an in- class assignment, makeups will be scheduled at the instructor's discretion and may be denied. ***If student fails any skill evaluation on 1st attempt, he/she must complete 2nd attempt during open lab hours or make other arrangements with instructor within one week of the failed 1st attempt.***
- Students that are absent on evaluation days will automatically fail that attempt of that skill. Serious unforeseen circumstances will be reviewed at the discretion of the instructor in consultation with the Program Coordinator. Proper written documentation (doctor's note, etc.) may be required upon return to the classroom to prevent abuse of the rule. **Two failed attempts of any skill will result in failure of the course.**
- In the event of a makeup, faculty may serve as the patient and/or students may be responsible for supplying a partner for competencies requiring role-play. All competencies

must be made up within one week of the failed 1st attempt and on or prior to last day of open lab in the semester in which the course is taken. Competencies assigned and completed during finals week per the course schedule are not eligible for makeup.

Math Competency Exam

Completion of a math competency exam for medication dosage calculations, temperature conversions, and clinical math, showing your work, with 85% accuracy and within two attempts is required by the end of MED262L Basic Patient Care II Lab. Failure to score a passing grade will be regarded as a failed attempt and the student will be unable to continue/graduate in the Medical Assistant program.

Medical Assistant Exit Exam

Completion of a Medical Assisting Certification Practice Exam is required during MED137 Externship. The exam "Assess students' readiness for the certification examination with question formats and an exam content outline matching the latest CMA, RMA, and NCMA exams. The exam will help you identify your strengths and weaknesses and provides individualized remediation to address knowledge deficits prior to taking the certification examination.

CPR & First Aid Course Requirement

Certification in Basic Cardiac Life Support and First Aid is required prior to entering the externship site and must remain current throughout the remainder of the program to graduation. The requirement must be fulfilled through successful completion of HED214. After HED214 course completion the credential may be maintained by an equivalent training offered by the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, or a National Safety Council training center.

Dress Code, Uniform, & Name Tags – Purchase through the campus Bookstore

Since medical assistant students are entering into a profession that maintains a high standard of personal conduct and which requires a dress code, students will be expected to adhere to a code of conduct and dress. Medical Assistant Students are asked to dress in scrubs (galaxy blue) for all clinical courses and business casual for all other classes. Students are required to dress professionally (business casual/scrubs) at the externship site. A short white cover-up/lab coat and name tag are required for all courses. **Students are responsible for their own supplies and expenses.** *Name Tag: Official SUNY Niagara ID, Must say Medical Assistant Student.*

Uniform items noted below:

Scrubs (shirt and pants) Galaxy Blue

White or black shoes

White Cover-up (as needed)



Medical Assistant Program Expenses – Equipment, Transportation, Textbook, & Supplies

In addition to tuition, student expenses may include but are not limited to:

Equipment:

Official Student Uniform	Lab coat
ID/Name badge	(Biotechniques)
goggles/eye wear	Stethoscope
Watch with secondhand	Bandage scissors
USB flash drive	Calculator

Transportation: Students are responsible for transportation to and from clinical sites, parking, and related clinical ID/parking fees.

Textbooks: (including lab manuals, media, and electronic software codes) – see campus Bookstore

Supplies: stationery supplies: pens, pencils, notebooks, binders, highlighters, paper, etc.

Additional:

1. Physical exam and required immunizations/titers/testing as needed, annual flu vaccine
2. Student membership fee for American Association of Medical Assistant (AAMA)
3. Criminal Background Check (per externship site requirements – not required at all sites)
4. Drug Screen (per externship site requirements – not required at all sites)

Medical Assistant Program Technical Standards

The practice of medical assistant involves communication with patients and direct patient care activities. Certain cognitive and psychomotor capabilities are required for the safe and skillful performance of these activities. In order to successfully progress through the Medical Assistant program a student must possess the following:

1. Visual acuity such as that needed for preparation/assistance in the administration of medications, observation and measurement of laboratory values, physical assessment activities and administrative tasks.
2. Hearing ability as that required to receive verbal messages from patients or staff members and to utilize hearing and monitoring devices such as a stethoscope. The student must be able to hear and transcribe medical dictation using conventional transcription equipment.
3. Motor skills and coordination as needed to implement the skills required to meet the needs of patients and also to operate computers and other technical equipment.
4. Communication skills such as those of speech, reading, and writing as needed to interact with and interpret patient needs and communication these as necessary to provide safe and effective care.
5. Reading, writing, and cognitive skills such as those required for written examinations, research papers and the composition of medical letters and communications.
6. Mathematical skills such as those necessary for laboratory calculation.
7. Intellectual and emotional ability to coordinate patient care and manage activities within an ambulatory care facility.
8. Ability to lift a minimum of fifty (50) pounds in assisting patients with getting on and off the examination table.

9. Ability to stand unsupported for up to forty-five (45) minutes.

Attendance

Medical assisting is a discipline that requires acquisition of knowledge and practical skills along with organizational and personal capabilities. Each class covers a lot of material and attendance is important as the curriculum builds on previously learned material. In order to meet the program and course outcomes and to provide the student with the best possible education, the medical assistant curriculum consists of classroom, laboratory, volunteer, and externship (practicum) experiences. A critical element that influences student success in all areas is attendance. Punctuality, consistent attendance, and the students' diligence in participating 100% are key factors to the successful completion of this program as well as to securing employment. Absent students are at risk of not meeting course outcomes, competencies, and subsequently not achieving passing grades.

Attendance Policy for Class and Lab

1. Students are to attend all classes and labs. The instructor is required to keep an accurate daily record of each student's attendance in all courses. Attendance is reported to the SUNY Niagara Records and Registration Office. Absenteeism can affect Financial Aid status.
2. A student will be marked absent if they do not attend class.
3. A student will be marked excused if they provide a valid excuse prior to class or written documentation if they are not able to make contact due to an unforeseen absence/illness/family death.
4. If a student misses an exam/presentation/lab (see separate lab and competency policies) points are deducted from their grade.
5. Persistent absences from class without appropriate documentation will end in student advisement to withdraw from the lab and the lecture- instructor will be notified.
6. In the event of absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor to:
 - a. Inform the instructor of absence, preferably prior to the absence.
 - b. Inquire and obtain work assigned and material covered
 - c. Arrange to make-up material missed including exams, quizzes, and assignments if possible. Certain activities such as in-class exercises and lab competencies cannot be made up due to extensive setup, perishable materials, teamwork components, etc. Students will receive a zero (0) for missed activities that cannot be made up (see competency policies). Alternative projects are not offered for missed activities that cannot be made up. See course syllabus for further details.
 - d. Competencies for the Medical Assistant program only allow two attempts to complete. Being absent from evaluation time counts as one failed attempt. Failure to successfully complete 100% of the competencies in a specific course will result in failure of the course.
7. Students are responsible for officially dropping a course they no longer wish to attend. Contact the Records and Registration Office to officially withdraw and notify the Program Coordinator. Please be aware deadlines for withdrawing from courses exist and the student is responsible for adherence to college timelines.
8. In addition to these policies, refer to the course syllabus for further details for specific attendance and tardy policies for courses. Courses may have additional absence, tardy, and/or participation policies that may impact your overall course grade.
9. In the event of an unexpected school closing (e.g., snow day) please check Brightspace and student email for instructions. School closing policy is found on the SUNY Niagara website and

catalog. School closing are announced on local radio and television stations, text alerts and SUNY Niagara website.

Laboratory Information

In laboratory courses, the student will be learning new skills applicable to externship and their future career. Thus, the acquisition of these skills is an integral part of the program. Students are to come to all laboratories prepared to practice skills or run experiments. Student preparation includes reading all assigned materials prior to the assigned laboratory. The scheduled lab time is utilized for instruction in, and practice of, required skills.

1. Students with any history of an underlying medical condition (i.e., diabetes, pregnancy, cardiac problems, seizure disorders, high blood pressure, allergies especially to insect/bee stings or to latex, etc.) must report these to the College Nurse IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO entering the program. All information is kept in strict confidence.
2. Students will conduct themselves in a manner that will exhibit an attitude of caring, respect, and dignity for fellow students and teachers. Professionalism is necessary. Disruptive or unsafe behavior will not be tolerated and will result in removal from lab.
3. Students are required to dress in appropriate attire depending on the activity – example: uniform.
4. Students are expected to maintain good hygiene/grooming.
5. All students must participate in maintaining a clean, safe environment.
6. All equipment should be returned to its appropriate storage location after each use.
7. All equipment is inspected annually and calibrated or repaired as needed. Please notify the faculty and/or technical assistants if equipment appears to be in need of repair or malfunctioning.
8. Each semester depending upon the equipment utilized, students will be given additional safety guidelines, which must be abided by all students.
9. Any emergencies or incidents that are out of the ordinary must be immediately reported to your lab instructor.
10. Additional supplies will be noted in the course syllabus.

Examination Policies & Procedures

Attendance at all scheduled examinations is mandatory. Absence from an examination must be excused by the instructor before the time of the scheduled examination or be the result of a serious, verifiable circumstance. Instructors can require documentation such as a physician's note or funeral notice before allowing a makeup examination. Refer to the course syllabi for additional course policies.

Testing and Test Taking Procedures

Seating arrangements and decisions on students leaving the room during a test are at the discretion of the instructor. The instructor may also stop a student from completing an exam in the event of violations of the test taking policies or cheating.

Due to college mandated assessment practices, instructors must, in most cases, retain all tests, quizzes, projects, labs, etc. for accreditation purposes. Students should make a duplicate of any paper, project, etc. that they want to keep prior to submitting for a grade. Students may not be permitted to keep exams or quizzes. Please refer to the individual course syllabi for more information.

Only pens, pencils, and other authorized tools such as a calculator will be allowed at the student's desk at the time of the exam. Drinks and food are not allowed. Backpacks, purses, and cellphones are not allowed. All cellphone use is prohibited during the testing period.

Makeups

Makeup **examinations** and/or quizzes are given at the discretion of the instructor. Instructors do not have to offer makeups. Students are responsible for contacting the instructor who will determine the manner in which the exam will be made up. Makeup exams may not be the same as the original exam and may include essay questions, oral exam, etc. Any missed exams that are not made up will be counted as a zero (0) for grading purposes. It is the student's responsibility to schedule a time for the makeup exam with the instructor. Missed final exams must be made up with 24 hours or the original test date and time or it will be counted as a zero (0). If a student misses a final exam, documentation of the absence with substantiating evidence must be presented at the time of the exam or the student will not be able to take the makeup. Refer to individual course syllabi for additional individual course policies.

Competencies not turned in/completed by due date will be a **failed** competency and are calculated equally to in-class practical's. Students will be allowed **two** attempts of each skill evaluation. The Evaluation Schedule will be posted on Brightspace prior to evaluation day. If a student fails any skill evaluation on 1st attempt, he/she must complete 2nd attempt during open lab hours or make other arrangements with instructor within one week of the failed 1st attempt. Students that are absent on evaluation days will automatically fail that attempt of that skill unless they have a signed medical excuse. **Two failed attempts of any skill will result in failure of the course.**

Grading

Final grades are earned based on a grading scale and policy established by the program for each course. Mid-semester deficiency warnings will be issued to students in the form of written correspondence from the College. Note that the distribution of percentages or points per each letter grade (A to F or S/U) is pre-determined by program faculty in accordance with College policies and procedures. Please refer to the individual course syllabi and College Catalog for more information. The Medical Assistant program does not round grades. Extra credit/bonuses may be given at the discretion of the instructor.

Grading System

The grading system will parallel SUNY Niagara policy. In accordance with College mission and vision academic freedom is recognized and respected. To ensure fair and equal grading for all students in the medical assistant program the grading system below is used.

GRADE	PERCENTAGE	QUALITY POINT		
A	100 – 95	4.0	I	Incomplete
A-	94 – 90	3.67	J	Audit
B+	89 – 86	3.33	N	Insufficient Information for grading
B	85 – 83	3.0	S	Satisfactory
B-	82 – 80	2.67	U	Unsatisfactory
C+	79 – 76	2.33	W	Course withdrawal without a grade (see college catalog)
C	75 – 73	2.0	X	Course withdrawal without a grade (see college catalog)
C-	72 – 70	1.67		
D+	69 – 67	1.33		
F	Below 67	0		

Policy

Grading Policy for Medical Assistant (MED) Courses Lecture, Laboratory, Practicum

Courses: A minimum grade of C is required in all Medical Assistant (MED) courses. Major Medical Assistant courses have multiple components: lecture (theory), laboratory, and practicum (clinical). A student must earn a minimum C grade in lecture, laboratory, and practicum courses to be successful and progress in the medical Assistant curriculum.

Grading Policy for Anatomy & Physiology, Advanced First Aid & CPR, Microbiology, Biotechniques, and Pharmacology Courses for Medical Assistant Students: A minimum grade of C in BIO 213E/L (Anatomy and Physiology I), BIO 214 E/L (Anatomy and Physiology II), HED 214E (Advanced First Aid & CPR), BIO 240 E/L (Biotechniques), BIO 221 E/L (Microbiology), and PHA 250 (General Pharmacology) must be earned to be successful and progress in the Medical Assistant curriculum.

Matriculated Status

Students must maintain continuous registration in Medical Assistant courses including prerequisite and co-requisite courses to remain matriculated in the Medical Assistant Program.

Unsafe Clinical Practice

Unsafe care is defined as “placing the patient/family/provider in clear and present danger.” When a student is unable to provide safe patient care and/or does not meet the ethical standards within the larger healthcare industry and the Medical Assistant profession, the program coordinator, upon recommendation from the medical assistant clinical faculty, will remove said student from the clinical/practicum educational component of said Medical Assistant course (MED 103L/PHL 100, and/or MED 137). A grade of “F” will be awarded. The student is not eligible for re-admission into the Medical Assistant program.

Five-Year Course Policy

If a student has taken any course (at SUNY Niagara or another college or university) with a MED, BIO or PHA prefix five or more years before enrolling in a subsequent MED, BIO, or PHA course, the MED, BIO, or PHA course(s) must be repeated.

Dual Major Option

Medical Assistant and Phlebotomist Certificate

Students interested in a dual major in medical assistant and phlebotomist certificate programs may apply for dual enrollment through the office of Student Development. To be eligible for dual enrollment, students must have a 2.0 average or above, and have successfully completed BIO213/213L, BIO 214/214L, and MED 103L (PHL100) at the time of application.

Dual Major Course Requirements

Dual-major students must successfully complete required medical assistant program courses AND the following courses to be eligible to graduate with both a Medical Assistant (AAS) and a Phlebotomist Certificate.

PHL 101 - Phlebotomy II - 2 Cr.
PHL 102 - Phlebotomy Practicum - 4 Cr.

Important Notes:

PHL 101 Phlebotomy II and PHL 102 Phlebotomy Practicum are offered in Spring Semester. Upon successful completion and graduation, students will be eligible to sit for medical assistant and phlebotomist national certification tests.

Student must consult with Financial Aid regarding impact of dual major enrollment. Enrollment in dual major option may delay graduation from the medical assistant program.

Academic Honesty & Integrity

Honest participation in academic endeavors fosters an environment in which optimal learning can take place and is consistent with the mission of SUNY Niagara. Academic misconduct is destructive to the spirit of the educational environment and therefore, cannot be condoned. Students are urged, as members of the SUNY Niagara academic community and as individuals, to strive for their own level of academic and personal excellence and to respect the rights of others to do so. Definitions

1. **Cheating** – includes, but is not limited to, use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests or examinations; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems or carrying out other assignments; the acquisition of tests, quizzes, examinations, reports, or projects from current or former students or collaborating on assignments with other current or former students when the assignment is to be an individual effort. Cheating includes: any activity which communicates answers, hints, suggestions, thoughts or knowledge between two students or among students; providing one's own answers or information as in the form of unauthorized "crib sheets" for a test; and, looking on another student's answer sheet.
2. **Plagiarism** – includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement of the author. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials. This also includes copying lab data/answers from another student's lab packet, homework, or copying and pasting from the internet without full and clear acknowledgement that it is not the student's original work.
3. **Academic Misconduct** – includes any or all forms of the above
4. **The use of AI tools** – (such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, QuillBot, or similar technologies) in academic work is governed by our commitment to academic honesty and integrity. The following actions with AI are considered forms of academic dishonesty. Submitting AI-generated work (wholly or in part) as your own without explicit permission or required attribution. Using AI to generate answers during closed-book tests, assignments, or assessments. Copying or paraphrasing content from AI tools and presenting it as original work without proper disclosure or citation. Relying on AI to complete coursework in a way that circumvents the intended learning process. Academic integrity also requires students to refrain from using AI in ways that provide unfair advantages or misrepresent their own knowledge and abilities. If you are uncertain whether your AI use aligns with our policies, consult your instructor before submission.

Academic Honesty & Integrity Policy

1. For the first incidence of academic misconduct in a course, the student will receive a grade of F [or zero (0)] for the test, quiz, assignment, or activity. No makeup will be given. If there is a second incidence in the same course, the student will receive a grade of F for the course. The Vice President of Student Services will be notified in writing. Failing a course due to academic misconduct is sufficient grounds for dismissal from the program.

Academic Misconduct & Academic Violation Procedures

The instructor who believes that an incidence of academic misconduct has occurred will discuss it immediately with the student. If, in the judgment of the instructor, the student has committed an act of academic misconduct or if the student admits that there has been misconduct, the instructor will assess the appropriate penalty. Instances of academic misconduct will be reported in writing to the Dean of Nursing, Physical and Allied Health and the Medical Assistant Program Coordinator. The purpose of this reporting will be to track individuals who have repeated incidents. If such a pattern of behavior is found, a report will be filled with the Vice President of Academic Affairs who will determine an appropriate sanction on a case-by-case basis. Students who think they have been treated unfairly may invoke the Academic Grievance Procedure, which is explained in the *SUNY Niagara Student Rights and Responsibilities Code of Conduct*.

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Student Academic Advising

Each semester students must meet with their academic advisor to discuss course registration and sequence of medical assisting courses. It is the student's responsibility to register for courses in proper sequence in order to successfully complete their degree in a timely manner. Failure to do so may lengthen the number of semesters to complete the program.

Current Student Contact Information

Students are asked to verify and update contact information in BANNER Web including address (and immediate notification of change of address), home and cell phone numbers, and email address to their instructor and college at the beginning of each semester and as needed. Contact information must be kept current at all times throughout the program. Not only do clinical agencies require current telephone numbers of all students participating in clinical activities, but also department faculty and staff must be able to contact students as needed concerning clinical/class matters.

Individual Accommodations

The College prohibits discrimination and protects its students from discrimination. Medical Assistant students are encouraged to bring information about needs and/or accommodations to the attention of the academic team early in order to avoid any delay in implementing assistance. Students with questions concerning services due to a disability should contact Accessibility Services. Accessibility Services staff work to assist all qualified students with disabilities at SUNY Niagara in the pursuit of their educational objectives. Our goal is to support and empower you in your quest to become your own self-advocate. To schedule an appointment or to request more information contact us by email at access@niagaracc.suny.edu or by phone at 716-614-6728.

The mission of Accessibility Services at SUNY Niagara is to provide reasonable academic adjustments and related services to qualified students with disabilities in the most inclusive setting possible and to enhance student independence while promoting self-advocacy in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the American with Disabilities Amendments Act.

Health Office Clearance:

Students must have a completed physical exam by their physician and full medical clearance from the Wellness Center (C-122) at SUNY Niagara prior to attending any volunteer, externship, or practicum education experience in medical assisting or phlebotomy. Failure to do so will result in said student being denied access to their externship affiliation. Health records must be kept current annually and throughout the entire period of enrollment. It is the student's responsibility to submit medical clearance by the Wellness Center to the program coordinator.

Insurance Information:

All students of the Medical Assistant program are covered by liability insurance provided by the College while a student at a facility for an externship. This does not cover any employment or volunteer activity a student performs at a facility outside of externship. Note: Students enrolled in MED103L or PHL100, PHL 102 and MED137 are required to obtain proper immunizations, a physical examination by a physician, SUNY Niagara Medical clearance prior to course registration. Obtain the Medical Assistant Physician's Physical for Clinical Rotations Form from the Nursing, Physical and Allied Health office: B138.

Academic Withdrawal from the Medical Assistant Program:

The withdrawal policy of SUNY Niagara will be followed as outlined in the current College Catalog and policies. In addition, the following procedure for student withdrawal is: Make an appointment with the Program Coordinator to discuss reasons for withdrawal. File a course withdrawal form with the appropriate College department. It is the student's responsibility to complete this procedure within the timeframe set forth by the College. Failure to do so may result in a grade of F assigned to the course. Make an appointment with Financial Aid department to review withdrawal consequences and implications for future semesters.

Classroom & Lab Etiquette

Please note that the proper classroom and laboratory behavior/etiquette is expected at all times.

1. Please be respectful of the instructor teaching the course. It is imperative that the teacher manage the classroom therefore, they should be the only one speaking. You are only to speak when you are asked a question by the instructor. If you have a question, you are to raise your hand and wait to be recognized before speaking.
2. Student chattering in class will not be tolerated. You will be asked to leave and a letter regarding your conduct will be filed with the Vice President of Student Affairs office. Remember other students in the classroom are here to learn. Your disruptive behavior is disrespectful and inhibits learning.
3. Students must show up on time for class and remain in your seat unless otherwise instructed. In the laboratory, your instructor will indicate when break times. Students excessively leaving the classroom and reentering will be asked to leave and a letter will be filed with the nursing and allied health office. Repeated offenses will result in your removal from the classroom or laboratory.
4. Clinical Laboratory evaluations of procedures are mandatory. Students are responsible to make sure that they attend lab, practice procedures, and be evaluated by their instructors. MED 261L, 262L, and BIO 240L have clinical laboratory evaluations and are competency or technique based, these are required by the Medical Assistant Program.
5. Students must attend MED103L MED261L BPC I Lab, MED 262 BPC II Lab in CLINICAL ATTIRE (UNIFORM).

Professional Attributes

The Medical Assistant program is structured to help you obtain the knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors and attitudes to gain employment in the healthcare industry. The business world demands a certain level of professionalism and courtesy in order to obtain and keep employment. In order to prepare you for employment in healthcare, all courses within the Medical Assistant curriculum require the same dedication. The program expects students will observe the same level of professionalism and courtesy in their interactions with instructors, classmates, college personnel, and health care professionals on campus and as community members. As a SUNY Niagara Medical Assistant student, you represent the entire Medical Assistant program as well as SUNY Niagara as a whole. Attitudes may be reflected in outward behavior such as facial expressions, actions, body language, and tone in conversation. Students must exhibit positive behaviors that reflect an attitude of openness to learning and motivation to help others. Listed below are some expected attitudes:

Professional Attributes

1. **Honesty & Integrity** – Does not lie, steal, or deceive in any way.
2. **Punctuality** – Arrives on time for class and externships
3. **Cooperativeness** – Follows established program and course policy, protocol, and procedures; demonstrates a willingness to work well with others and is receptive to suggestions for improvement.
4. **Pride in workmanship** – Strives for improvement in assignments and projects; requests assistance when having difficulty in attaining the specified performance standards.
5. **Mature Actions** – Assumes responsibility and consequences for his/her actions; accepts his/her own limitations; strives to resolve personal conflicts in a professional and kind manner.
6. **Consideration for Others** – Demonstrates through verbal and non-verbal communication thoughtful regard for the feelings and rights of other students, faculty, and staff and externship personnel as well as the public. The medical assistant student is a member of a team and must therefore learn to cooperate with others. Being respectful and courteous with classmates is the first step towards this goal. Students should show proper respect and courtesy to the members of faculty and staff. This applies whether in the classroom, laboratory, at externship, or anywhere on or off campus.
7. **Enthusiasm** – Displays initiative in class, lab, and in externship; volunteers to assume responsibility.
8. **Ability to accept constructive criticism gracefully** – Strives to improve and is not defensive but receptive to suggestions for improvement.
9. **Class decorum** – Focuses conversations during class, lab, and externship on information relevant to learning. Students should remember class, lab, and externship are designed to be learning experiences.
10. **Loyalty** – Supports with words and actions the ideals and policies of the college, the program and the profession. Support your fellow classmates and instructors with words and actions.
11. **Pride in personal appearance** – Maintains professional appearance and personal hygiene consistent with the program's guidelines.
12. **Tact** – Exercises discretion in words and actions in order to maintain good relations with peers, faculty, healthcare workers, and the public.

Disruptive Student Behavior

All official *SUNY Niagara College Catalog* and, *The Student Rights & Responsibilities, Code of Conduct* policies are followed concerning disruptive student behavior. The instructor has the right to remove (or prevent the attendance of) any person from any class activity/field trip/event at any time for any reason the instructor deems to be disruptive, insubordinate, inappropriate, or detrimental to the well-being of others or to the reputation of the program or college.

The instructor reserves the right to enforce a seating arrangement on the class or a subset of the class in an effort to minimize disruptive or discourteous behavior.

Questions and comments must be relevant to the topic at hand. If you have questions that are not pertinent to the topic at hand or that the instructor chooses not to answer during class time, you may schedule an appointment with the instructor during office hours to discuss further. Any questions, comments, or behaviors during class time that are deemed to be distracting, harassing or intimidating will result in the student being permanently removed from the course and a failing grade.

Previous inappropriate behavior (current or previous semesters), as determined by the instructor or program coordinator is sufficient grounds for the instructor to prohibit a student from participating in off-campus community events. In such a case, an alternative project will be assigned to the student for completion within a given timeframe and will be calculated in the student's final grade.

If a student in attendance at an off-campus community event engages in inappropriate behavior and does not heed a warning to stop from the instructor, the student will be awarded an F for that assignment and may be removed from the program.

Behavior which faculty may declare disruptive includes, but is not limited to:

- Entering class late or leaving early (without permission)
- Eating/drinking in class without permission
- Sleeping in class
- Persistent speaking without faculty invitation to do so as part of the learning process
- Inappropriate use of electronic devices
- Disputing the authority of faculty or staff
- Arguing with faculty, staff, or other students
- Electronic communications which are abusive, harassing, or excessive
- Incivility
- Threats of any kind and/or harassment
- Physical or verbal disruptions or assault

Faculty will call Security and the Division Dean immediately if any of the following situations occur and documented by the program a letter will be placed in the student file:

- A student threatens or intimidates faculty, staff, or other students
- A student engages in violent behavior
- Faculty suspect criminal activity
- A situation begins to escalate, such as discussions turning into shouting

Note: *The Medical Assistant program reserves the right to assign failing grades and take steps to permanently dismiss from the program any student for failure to display appropriate attitudes and professionalism, reflected by their behavior and words consistent with the information above and throughout this handbook.*

Medical Assistant Complaint Process

If a student has a concern about the Medical Assistant program, the student should discuss this concern with Medical Assistant program faculty. In the event that this does not resolve the problem, or the student is not comfortable discussing the concern with the faculty, the student should utilize the following:

Medical Assistant Complaint Policy and Complaint Procedures

SUNY Niagara Medical Assistant Complaint Policy for complaints falling outside the realm of institutional due process:

- I. It is the policy of the SUNY Niagara Medical Assistant program to be responsive to concerns of individuals who are associated with the Medical Assistant program, including, but not limited to: prospective and enrolled students, clinical education sites, employers of graduates, and the general public. It is the policy of the SUNY Niagara Medical Assistant program to prohibit any form of retribution or retaliation as a consequence of filing a complaint.
- II. SUNY Niagara Medical Assistant Program Complaint Procedure
 - a. The following steps should be followed by any individual with a complaint concerning the medical assistant program. The procedure is designed to assure that complaints may be handled consistently and equitably.
 - i. Submit the complaint in writing or via email to the Medical Assistant Program Coordinator.
 - ii. If the complaint is not resolved after following step #1, then submit the complaint to the Dean of Nursing, Physical and Allied Health.
 - iii. If the complaint remains unresolved after following step #2, then submit the complaint the Vice president of Academic Affairs.
 - iv. If the complaint remains unresolved after following step #3, then submit the complaint the College President.
- III. Records of complaints and notation of actions taken in the disposition of complaints are kept in the offices of each of the individuals receiving them.

Drug & Alcohol Policy

SUNY Niagara is committed to the elimination of drug and alcohol abuse for its students and employees. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in and on SUNY Niagara owned or controlled property and at any off campus required or optional activity. Any SUNY Niagara student determined to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including removal from the program and the college. **No student will report to class activity, event, or externship under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol.** Violation of these rules by a student will be reason for mandatory evaluation/treatment for a substance abuse disorder or for disciplinary action up to and including removal from the Medical Assistant program and college.

In addition, students must report to all class, lab, externship, and off-campus events in fit condition, physically and mentally. Observations noted that indicate intoxication may include, but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate physical appearance
- Altered speech
- Uneven gait
- Uncommon changes in behavior
- Lack of judgment
- Decreased performance
- Smell of intoxicants
- Inappropriate actions
- Chronic absenteeism or patterns of absence/tardiness
- Accidents during class, lab, or activity
- Impaired memory or attention

When a faculty member/externship supervisor/preceptor has reason to believe that a student is under the influence of chemical intoxicants, is impaired and/or unable to perform duties, the student will be relieved of class/externship/lab/event related duties/activities and will leave the class, externship, event, or lab site. The student and/or faculty/supervisor will make arrangements for safe transportation. This may include calling security or local law enforcement officials.

The student will be referred the Vice President of Student Services and other resources, such a counseling, as appropriate. If the incident occurred at an off-campus event or field trip, the Program Coordinator may permanently dismiss the student from the program.

Any costs incurred related to any incident will be the students' responsibility. All incidents will remain confidential and will be confined to a "need to know" basis. Failure to abide by the dress code, non-smoking and drug and alcohol policies may result in the student being dismissed from a field-trip, volunteer experience, or externship site placement. Students may not be permitted to makeup-missed work. **In the event of an occurrence at externship, the externship sponsor has the right to terminate the student from the externship if failure to abide by the dress/non-smoking code/drug and alcohol policy is violated and/or occurrence is deemed to be insubordination.**

Medical Assistant Social Media Policy

Social media is defined as user-generated content that is shared over the internet via technologies that promote engagement, sharing and collaboration. It includes but is not limited to social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, TikTok, Instagram, personal websites, news forums, chat rooms and blogs to name a few.

It is recognized that social media is an avenue for self-expression, but Medical Assistant students must remember that they are personally responsible for the content they contribute and should use social media responsibly. Be mindful that what you publish/post may be public for a long time and that limiting access to postings through privacy settings is not sufficient to ensure absolute privacy. In addition, potential employers now commonly utilize analysis of public personal web sites as a determination of possible employment offers.

The following code of conduct guidelines regarding social/electronic media that must be adhered to:

1. Medical Assistant students must not use any form of social media to harass, bully, coerce, intimidate or retaliate against any other student, college faculty or staff member, the SUNY Niagara Medical Assistant program, employee, or patient.
2. Medical Assistant externship sites must recognize that they have an ethical and legal obligation to maintain patient privacy and confidentiality at all times. Medical Assistant students must not transmit by way of any electronic media any patient relationship information or image that is reasonably anticipated to violate patient rights to confidentiality or privacy or to otherwise degrade or embarrass the patient. Also, Medical Assistant students must not share, post or otherwise disseminate any information (including images) about a patient or information gained in the Medical Assistant patient relationship with anyone.
3. Medical Assistant students must not take photos or videos of patients or of anything on externship agency property on personal electronic devices, including mobile devices.
4. Medical Assistant students must promptly report any inappropriate postings, breach of confidentiality or privacy to the coordinator of the Medical Assistant program.
5. Medical Assistant students who use social media during externship may become distracted and interfere with the task they are performing, putting a patient at risk. Cell phones are prohibited at the externship site.
6. Behavior related to social media must comply with all SUNY Niagara policies, externship site policies, discrimination and harassment policies, HIPAA policies and rules of practice. Ultimately, you have sole responsibility for what you post or publish in any form of online social media. If your social media activity shows that you have exercised poor judgment in such activities, or if your activities violate any of the guidelines as stated in this policy, disciplinary action may be taken against you.
7. Students are personally as well as may be legally responsible for anything that they post on social media sites.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Health, Wellness & Safety

The Medical Assistant program expects students to behave in ways that will promote health and safety for students, faculty, staff, and patients. Students are expected to follow standard protocol and biohazardous safety rules in the laboratory setting and at the externship site.

Professional Risk

Interactions with patient/clients in the health care system carry inherent risks to both the patient/client and the caregiver, including, but not limited to communicable disease. In the Medical Assistant program, students will be given information regarding known risks for various medical conditions and provided necessary skills to implement precautions. Standard precautions prescribed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will be taught to all students and must be strictly observed.

All students are expected to provide appropriate care to all patient/clients assigned to them in any health care setting as a learning experience. These assignments may include patient/clients with medical diagnoses of tuberculosis, hepatitis, HIV/AIDs and/or others. Additionally, it will be the responsibility of the student to implement Standard Precautions as appropriate when providing care and adhere to all facility policies when off campus.

Medical Assistant students and faculty should be particularly aware of potential exposure to infectious agents in the laboratories and clinical areas especially when there is a reasonable expectation of exposure to body fluids. All students will wear personal protective equipment in the lab and clinical areas. This may include but is not limited to, gloves, mask with face shield, goggles, and fluid-proof lab gown/coat. A signed statement of informed consent is required.

Unsafe Clinical Practice

Unsafe care is defined as “placing the patient/family/provider in clear and present danger.” When a student is unable to provide safe patient care and/or does not meet the ethical standards within the larger healthcare industry and the Medical Assistant profession, the program coordinator, upon recommendation from the medical assistant clinical faculty, will remove said student from the clinical/practicum educational component of said Medical Assistant course (MED 103L/PHL 100, and/or MED 137). A grade of “F” will be awarded. The student is not eligible for re-admission into the Medical Assistant program.

Immunizations

Prior to student enrollment in MED103L and MED137, students must provide documentation of fitness including physical examination, immunizations and tuberculosis screening test.

Standard Precaution Policies

Standard precautions deal with the handling of patient samples, dressing, and contaminated materials. These precautions are mandated by OSHA, Federal, State, and County laws. The guidelines that follow were adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

and include information from OSHA standards. These guidelines are common practice in physician offices, hospitals, laboratories, and SUNY Niagara.

Note: Students will receive academic preparation on the regulations in course work within the program. These guidelines apply to all procedures performed on campus in our laboratories and clinical externship sites.

Students are expected to follow standard precautions in the physician's office (listed below), as well as any policies set forth by the externship site. General standard precaution guidelines apply to all patients and in the class setting. Students will be responsible for following these precautions to the letter.

Safety in the Laboratory Guidelines & Agreement

Although there are certain hazards present in the laboratory/clinical classroom, it is possible to make the classroom a safe working environment. Medical assisting students and faculty should be particularly aware of potential exposure to infectious agents in the campus laboratories and clinical areas when there is a reasonable expectation of exposure to body fluids. Each participant must agree to observe all safety rules posted or un-posted which are required by the instructor. No set of rules can cover all of the hazards that may be present. However, several general rules are listed below.

1. Refrain from horseplay.
2. Avoid eating, drinking, smoking, gum chewing or applying makeup in the work area.
3. Wear a laboratory jacket or coat. Gown/Lab coat should be worn when clothing is likely to be soiled with blood or body fluids.
4. Wear closed-toe shoes.
5. Pin long hair away from face/neck to avoid contact with chemicals, equipment, or flames.
6. Avoid wearing chains, bracelets, rings, or other loose hanging jewelry.
7. Use universal barrier precautions in handling patients and biological specimens, including human blood and diagnostic products made from human blood.
8. Disinfect work area before and after laboratory procedures and at any other time necessary.
9. Wash hands before and after caring for EACH patient. Hands should be washed immediately after gloves are removed.
10. Soiled linen and articles should be disposed of according to office policy.
11. Hands and other skin surfaces should be washed immediately and thoroughly when in contact with blood or other body fluids and any other time necessary.
12. Gloves should be worn when touching blood or body fluids, mucous membranes or non-intact skin of all patients, biological specimens, hazardous chemicals, or reagents.
13. Gloves should be worn when handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids.
14. Gloves should be changed after contact with each patient and between different procedures for the same patient.
15. Place used needles or other sharps in an appropriate puncture-resistant, labeled, biohazard container. (A rigid, puncture-proof container must be used for disposal of sharp objects such as needles/lancets). (Needles should NOT be recapped, purposely bent or broken, removed from disposable syringes or otherwise manipulated by hand).
16. Dispose of all other waste appropriately and as posted.
17. Masks and eye protection/safety goggles should be worn when likely to be splashed during procedures that are likely to generate splashes of blood or other body fluids.
18. Masks should be worn when caring for a patient with known or suspected respiratory pathogens such as flu or tuberculosis.

19. Wipe up spills promptly and appropriately for the type of spill and inform instructor.
20. Avoid tasting, smelling, or breathing the dust of any chemicals.
21. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for operating equipment
22. Handle equipment with care and store it properly.
23. Report any broken or frayed electrical cords, exposed electrical wires, or damaged equipment
24. Discard any broken glassware into a safe container.
25. Allow visitors only in the nonworking area of the laboratory.
26. Supervisor should be notified IMMEDIATELY of all needle-stick injuries or mucous membrane exposure to blood or other body fluids
27. Report any accident to the supervisor immediately.

Chemical Hazards

Federal law requires that all individuals are notified about hazardous substances present in the work place. This law applies to all and is intended to raise consciousness regarding worker safety. Healthcare facilities are required to prepare Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for all hazardous substances used in their office. These are compiled into manuals (paper or electronic) and are available in designated departments and externship sites with which SUNY Niagara medical assistant students are affiliated.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS) include:

1. Information regarding toxicity/ingestion of hazardous substance, signs and symptoms, and treatment
2. Procedures used for safe clean up and disposal of hazardous substances.
3. Necessary precautions to be used when working with hazardous substances.

Notice to Students with Latex Allergies

Purpose: The purpose of this written procedure is the prevention of allergic reactions to natural rubber latex at SUNY Niagara. **Potential sources of Latex:** Medical supplies (gloves, tubing, other equipment); Office supplies (rubber bands, erasers); Household objects (carpets balloons, pacifiers). **Pro-active Steps to Prevent Possible Reactions:**

- Persons with suspected or known hypersensitivity to latex must take responsibility to decrease their exposure and have their own protocol for self- protection.
- Talk to your doctor about carrying an epi-pen for emergency situations.
- Notify your instructors about any serious allergies you have.

Symptoms of a latex allergy include one or more of the following:

- Hives or welts} swelling of the affected area, runny or stuffy nose, sneezing, red, itchy or teary eyes, sore throat or hoarse voice,
- Chest tightness, wheezing, shortness of breath, lowered blood pressure (if these symptoms occur, this is a medical emergency).

Intervention if Reaction Occurs: This may be a medical emergency do not hesitate. Call the Wellness Center immediately. Wellness Center, C-122, ext. 6275. The nurse who responds will determine the need for further assistance. (**Remember after hours, call Security.**). If due to latex, remove latex source. Wash skin, eyes, etc. Remove person from area (such as an area

where gloves were removed and powder flew into the air. Do not leave the involved person alone. Remain calm and reassure the individual that medical assistance has been called.

CONFIDENTIALITY

PRIVACY INFORMATION

SUNY Niagara expects honesty from all students and seeks to protect individual privacy rights. Medical Assistant students are expected to adhere to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy regulations at school and at the externship site. Students may be dismissed from the program for disciplinary or academic reasons, including but not limited to violation of any federal, state, or local law.

Professional Integrity

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the official Code of Student Conduct that appears in the *SUNY Niagara College Catalog* and, *The Student Rights & Responsibilities Code of Conduct*. It is important that students demonstrate integrity and conduct themselves professionally at all times on and off campus, and for all program related activities. Behaviors that call into question a student's integrity are not appropriate for any student, especially medical assisting and medical administrative assisting students. Students caught in acts of academic dishonesty or plagiarism on assessments, examinations, or other graded material are subject to *The Student Rights & Responsibilities Code of Conduct*.

Authorization for Release of Student Information

A student must sign a release form if he/she would like to authorize the Medical Assistant Program to release information to prospective employers for the purpose of gaining employment. Written permission must be granted to the faculty and staff of SUNY Niagara in order for the representative to provide or discuss information, both oral and/or written, to prospective employers. ***The Medical Assistant Program will not verify specific dates of attendance, specific grades or grade point averages. The student must request an official transcript for those purposes. An official transcript may be obtained through the Records & Registration office at the campus.***

Violations of Confidentiality

Patient confidentiality is a professional ethical responsibility and is an expectation of all medical assistant students. Any information obtained through working with health records is, by law, confidential. All information discussed or available in class is confidential and may not be discussed outside of the classroom setting. Similarly, any discussion information obtained during externship in a healthcare setting that pertains to patients, physicians or instruction matters is considered confidential. Students are asked to read and sign a confidentiality agreement. Students who violate confidentiality will face disciplinary actions as outlined in the SUNY Niagara Catalog. Examples of violations include but are not limited to, removal of any patient records that have possible identifiers, and any patient related discussion that is or may be overheard by any persons, or that occur in any location other than the immediate patient-care or classroom/learning environment without patient authorization.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

Key Concepts of the Privacy Rule – Some important terms to help you understand the privacy rule.

Protected Health Information (PHI) – Health information is any information that applies to a health condition now, in the past, or in the future. If health information includes data that would let somebody identify the patient, it is protected health information. For example, a lab report is PHI because it contains a patient's name or ID number, and information about his or her health.

Disclosure – Means to give out PHI. Providing information about a person for the purpose of billing is one example of disclosure. Talking about a patient's condition in a public place is another example. Some kinds of disclosure are allowed. Others are not.

Minimum Necessary Information – The minimum necessary information is the least information you need to do your job. You should:

- Access the information you need
- Use this information only to do your job
- Limit the information you share with a person to what he or she needs to know in order to do his or her job.

Reasonable Safeguards – you and medical facilities have to take steps to make sure information remains private. These steps are called reasonable safeguards.

Student Confidentiality Agreement

Patient information from health records is routinely available to students in the course of their studies at SUNY Niagara and in various clinical practice, externship sites, and volunteer sites. This information is confidential and protected by New York State and United States law, and prohibit any disclosure of protect health information without the specific written consent of the patient/client and/or organization to who it pertains, belongs to, or as otherwise permitted by law.

Students must be particularly discreet in regard to certain highly-sensitive patient information, including HIV- and AIDS—related information, as well as that related to psychiatric, alcohol, and substance abuse treatment.

Unauthorized disclosure of patient information is a violation of State and/or Federal law, and may result in disciplinary action or expulsion from SUNY Niagara Medical Assistant program (according to College policies and procedures), legal action, and/or fine and/or imprisonment.

NOTE: With student permission, copies of signed student-agreement may be distributed to health care facilities and physician offices with which students will come into contact during their course of study at SUNY Niagara.

PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALING INFORMATION

Medical Assistant Occupational Description (CAAHEP) & Profession Description

Medical assistants are multiskilled health professionals specifically educated to work in a variety of healthcare settings performing clinical and administrative duties. The practice of medical assisting necessitates mastery of a complex body of knowledge and specialized skills requiring both formal education and practical experience that serve as standards for entry into the profession.

Medical assistants work under the supervision of physicians in their offices or other medical settings. In accordance with respective state laws, they perform a broad range of administrative and clinical duties:

Administrative duties

- Scheduling and receiving patients
- Performing basic administrative skills
- Handling telephone calls and writing correspondence
- Serving as a liaison between the physician and other individuals
- Managing practice finances

Clinical duties

- Preparing and maintaining electronic medical records
- 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 tests
- Preparing and administering medications as directed by the physician

Both administrative and clinical duties involve maintenance of equipment and supplies for the practice. A medical assistant who is sufficiently qualified by education and/or experience may be responsible for supervising personnel, developing and conducting public outreach programs to market the physician's professional services, and participating in the negotiation of leases and of equipment and supply contracts.

Employment Characteristics

More medical assistants are employed by practicing physicians than any other type of allied health personnel. Medical assistants are usually employed in physicians' offices and other ambulatory healthcare settings, where they perform a variety of administrative and clinical tasks to facilitate the work of the physician. The responsibilities of medical assistants vary, depending on whether they work in a clinic, hospital, large group practice, or small private office. With demand from more than 200,000 physicians, there are, and will probably continue to be, almost unlimited opportunities for formally educated medical assistants.

American Association of Medical Assistants

Established in 1955, the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) continues to be the premier organization dedicated to serving the interests of medical assistants. In fact, it is the only association in the world devoted exclusively to the medical assisting profession. The AAMA is a tri-level organization comprising national, state, and local levels. The national association maintains the Executive Office in Chicago. State societies are chartered by and affiliated with the national association. Local chapters are chartered by and directly affiliated with their state society. The mission of the American Association of Medical Assistants is to provide the medical assistant professional with education, certification, credential acknowledgment, networking opportunities, scope-of-practice protection, and advocacy for quality patient-centered health care.

CMA (AAMA) Credential

The CMA (AAMA) is awarded to candidates who pass the CMA (AAMA) Certification/Recertification Examination. The CMA (AAMA) exam is the only medical assisting examination that uses the National Board of Medical Examiners to construct and administer the exam. The CMA (AAMA) credential must be recertified every 60 months by the continuing education or re-examination method in order to use the credential.

Medical Assisting Code of Ethics

The Medical Assisting Code of Ethics of the AAMA sets forth principles of ethical and moral conduct as they relate to the medical profession and the particular practice of medical assisting. Members of the AAMA dedicated to the conscientious pursuit of their profession, and thus desiring to merit the high regard of the entire medical profession and the respect of the general public which they serve, do pledge themselves to strive always to:

1. Render service with full respect for the dignity of humanity.
2. Respect confidential information obtained through employment unless legally authorized or required by responsible performance of duty to divulge such information.
3. Uphold the honor and high principles of the profession and accept its disciplines.
4. Seek to continually improve the knowledge and skills of medical assistants for the benefit of patients and professional colleagues.
5. Participate in additional service activities aimed toward improving the health and well-being of the community.

Medical Assisting Creed

The Medical Assisting Creed of the AAMA sets forth medical assisting statements of belief:

I believe in the principles and purposes of the profession of medical assisting.
I endeavor to be more effective.
I aspire to render greater service.
I protect the confidence entrusted to me.
I am dedicated to the care and well-being of all people.
I am loyal to my employer.
I am true to the ethics of my profession.
I am strengthened by compassion, courage, and faith.

Certification/Registration Credentialing

Graduates of the Medical Assistant Program receive an AAS (Associates in Applied Science) Degree and are eligible to sit for the Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) exam sponsored by the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA). Graduates are also eligible to sit for other nationally recognized certification and/or registration exams. SUNY Niagara is a testing center for the National Center for Competency Testing (NCCT) and offers testing two times per academic year.

Generally, individuals found guilty of a felony, pleaded guilty to a felony, or had a professional license, registration, or certification denied, revoked, suspended, or subjected to probationary conditions by a regulatory authority or certification board are not eligible to take national exams.

CMA (AAMA)

American Association of Medical Assistants
20 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 1575
Chicago, IL 60606
Toll free: 800-228-2262
www.aama-ntl.org

Generally, individuals found guilty of a felony, pleaded guilty to a felony, or had a professional license, registration, or certification denied, revoked, suspended, or subjected to probationary conditions by a regulatory authority or certification board are not eligible for the CMA (AAMA) Exam. However, the Certifying Board may grant a waiver based upon mitigating circumstances. If a candidate wishes to request that the Certifying Board permit them to take the test, that candidate must submit a Request for Waiver form (available at www.aama-ntl.org) and written evidence that demonstrates their felony conviction or plea should not prevent them from taking the CMA (AAMA) Exam. [Retrieved January 2018 from <http://aama-ntl.org/docs/default-source/cma-exam/exam-eligibility.pdf>].

ADDITIONAL NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS & REGISTRY

For more information regarding application and eligibility please visit the websites listed below

RMA (AMT)

American Medical
Technologists
10700 W. Higgins Road,
Suite 150
Rosemont, IL 60018
847-823-5169
americanmedtech.org

NCMA (NCCT)

National Center for
Competency Testing
7007 College Blvd., Suite
385
Overland Park, KS 66211
Toll Free: 800-875-4404
ncctinc.com

CCMA (NHA)

National Healthcareer
Association
11161 Overbrook Road
Leawood, KS 66211
Toll free: 800-661-5592
nhanow.com

APPENDIX C – FORMS

Medical Assistant Student Information Sheet

Contact Information

Name	
@ID	
Street Address	
City ST ZIP Code	
Home Phone	
Alternate Phone	
E-Mail Address	

Graduation

Expected Date of Graduation: _____

Notes:

Special Skills or Qualifications

Do you have any previous background in healthcare or the medical assisting area? If so, please briefly describe below and include years or period.

--

Person to Notify in Case of Emergency

Name	
Street Address	
City ST ZIP Code	
Phone	
Phone	
Relationship	

SUNY Niagara
HANDBOOK STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING, AGREEMENT, & RECEIPT

I _____ am a student enrolled in the Medical Assistant Program at SUNY Niagara AAS degree program, and therefore I am required to follow the program requirements as stipulated in this program ***handbook, the course syllabi, the college catalog, and the SUNY Niagara Student's Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.***

I understand that the Medical Assistant Program Student Handbook is a supplement to the information provided by the College and may be amended as necessary to conform to the standards of the Medical Assisting program to facilitate the most successful outcome for students.

I understand that any disruption or unsafe behavior may result in dismissal from the program.

I agree to follow these requirements/responsibilities and accept the consequences of not following them.

I acknowledge and understand the courses I need to complete my program, required program progression and sequencing. I understand that I must obtain satisfactory medical clearance to attend MED103L (PHL100/102) and MED137 externship placements.

I acknowledge that I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I have received answers to my satisfaction.

By signing the ***Statement of Understanding***, I acknowledge that I have ***received, read, understand, and agree with the statements above***, the SUNY Niagara Medical Assistant Program Student Handbook, course policies, and requirements and acknowledge that I am responsible for abiding by the contents and policies throughout the program

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Student Name: _____

Program Coordinator: _____

SUNY Niagara
STUDENT CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

By signing below, I _____ understand that in the course of the Medical Assistant Program I will encounter information that is of a sensitive and personal nature. I acknowledge that information shared in the classroom environment and in the observation of clinical activities must be kept confidential and private and attest that,

1. I understand patient information from health records is routinely available to me in the course of my studies at SUNY Niagara and in various clinical practice, externship sites, and volunteer sites.
2. I understand that this information is confidential and protected by New York State and United States law, and prohibit any disclosure of this information without the specific written consent of the patient/client and/or organization to who it pertains, belongs to, or as otherwise permitted by law. In accordance with current federal and state mandates designed to “develop security standards to prevent unauthorized use or disclosure of any health information that is electronically maintained or used in electronic transmission.”
3. I acknowledge that any access I have to written or electronic medical charting is strictly confidential. I further acknowledge that should I have access to such record maintenance systems, I will not attempt to review confidential material in any regard other than by direct order from a supervisor, physician, or other health care provider.
4. I acknowledge that I must comply with any confidentiality and regulatory compliance standards that may be imposed upon me during any of my clinical activities.
5. I understand I must be particularly discreet in regard to certain highly-sensitive patient information, including HIV- and AIDS—related information, as well as that related to psychiatric, alcohol, and substance abuse treatment.
6. I have been informed that any unauthorized disclosure of patient information is in violation of State and/or Federal law, and may result in disciplinary action or expulsion from SUNY Niagara Medical Assistant program (according to College policies and procedures), legal action, and/or fine and/or imprisonment.
7. I assert that I have read and agree to follow all confidentiality policies and procedures set forth by Federal and State law, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), SUNY Niagara, and external sites for my protection and the protection of others.
8. In the classroom, students are encouraged to participate in discussions and may choose to share relevant and appropriate personal information. I understand that shared information is to be held in confidence. I understand that I may not discuss any information about any student with anyone in or outside of the classroom.
9. I have read and understand the statements and acknowledge the risks of violating confidentiality.
10. I have had all of my questions answered to my satisfaction.
11. I understand and consent to the distribution of copies of this agreement to health care facilities with which students will come into contact during their course of study at SUNY Niagara.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Student Name: _____

Witness Name: _____

MEDIA RELEASE FORM

I give permission for SUNY Niagara to use my image (photograph or digital image), voice, video, and quotes in publications, advertising, marketing, publicity, web pages, and other promotional activities for SUNY Niagara. This may include, but is not limited to newspaper ads, billboards, web pages, and others.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Student Name: _____

STUDENT-SUCCESS COMMITMENT STATEMENT & AGREEMENT

I _____, acknowledge personal responsibility for my own success and have made a commitment to:

1. Attend, be on time for, and be prepared for all scheduled classes, labs, and activities.
2. Abide by all program, course, & SUNY Niagara policies and will accept the consequences of not following them.
3. Ask questions and provide feedback; utilize all available resources to enhance learning.
4. Conduct myself in a professional and courteous manner at all times.
5. Take full responsibility for my own success in this program.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Student Name: _____

Program Coordinator: _____ Date: _____

SAFETY IN THE LABORATORY GUIDELINES & AGREEMENT

Although there are certain hazards present in the laboratory/clinical classroom, it is possible to make the classroom a safe working environment. Medical assisting students and faculty should be particularly aware of potential exposure to infectious agents in the campus laboratories and clinical areas when there is a reasonable expectation of exposure to body fluids. Each participant must agree to observe all safety rules posted or un-posted which are required by the instructor. No set of rules can cover all of the hazards that may be present.

Please initial the item listed below:

_____ I agree to follow all set rules and regulations as required by the instructor or supervisor, including those listed the Medical Assistant Program Handbook.

_____ I have been informed that biological specimens and blood products may possess the potential of transmitting diseases such as hepatitis and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

_____ I understand that even though diagnostic products are tested for HIV antibodies and hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg), no known test can offer 100% assurance that products derived from human blood or body fluids will not transmit disease.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Student Name: _____

TESTING INTEGRITY STATEMENT & AGREEMENT

SUNY Niagara does not tolerate academic dishonesty. This presents itself in many forms as explained in the SUNY Niagara Student's Rights and Responsibilities Handbook and College Catalog.

In some semesters, there may be multiple sections of the same course running at the same time during the day and/or evening. Students are asked to not discuss testing, skills evaluation, or any other manner of assessment and evaluation with any medical assisting or SUNY Niagara student at any time during their course of major study at the College. Discovery of such disclosure may result in a zero for the exam/test/quiz for which the disclosure was made and may result in immediate dismissal from the medical assistant program.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and acknowledge the contents of the statements above and will adhere to the requirements during my educational experience at SUNY Niagara.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Student Name: _____

Program Coordinator: _____ Date: _____

Drug and Alcohol Policy Agreement

As a condition of participation in the Medical Assistant program, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Drug and Alcohol Policy described in this handbook and understand the prohibited conduct.

I understand that if a faculty member, externship supervisor, or preceptor suspects a student is under the influence or impaired and/or unable to perform required duties, the student will be relieved of responsibilities and asked to leave the class, externship, event, or lab immediately.

All incidents and their documentation will be handled with confidentiality and limited to those with a legitimate need to know.

Externship sponsors may terminate a student's placement for violations or insubordination.

By signing this statement, I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to comply with the Drug and Alcohol Policy.

Student Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____