

Division of Health Sciences
Medical Assisting Program

Student Handbook
2021-2022



**TECHNICAL COLLEGE
OF THE LOWCOUNTRY**

Student Handbooks constitute Student Policy and are revised as needed.
Please go to TCL.edu for updates.

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The Medical Assistant Program Student Handbook

The Medical Assistant Program Student Handbook serves to supplement the College Catalog/Student Handbook and the Division of Health Sciences Handbook in order to provide additional guidance for students enrolled in the Medical Assistant Program at the Technical College of the Lowcountry. It thus outlines policies specific to the Medical Assistant student. It also provides a framework for student performance and behaviors. Students are expected to become familiar with the content of this handbook. Should a student have questions or concerns related to the content of this handbook, he or she should contact the Director of the Medical Assistant Program immediately for clarification and resolution. Students are required to sign a Student Handbook Agreement verifying that they have received, read and understand the contents of this handbook and that they agree to abide by the handbook during their tenure in the program. **Students should however understand that as the MA program continues to evolve, certain aspects of the program including but not limited to the curriculum plan, course work and clinical education may change. Students will be advised of such changes, but should also periodically check the TCL website for the latest updates.**

Accreditation Status

Technical College of the Lowcountry is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award Associate Degrees, Diplomas, and Certificates. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Technical College of the Lowcountry.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

The Technical College of the Lowcountry is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all qualified applicants for admissions or employment without regard to race, gender, national origin, age, religion, marital status, veteran status, disability, or political affiliation or belief. All programs, activities, rights and privileges generally accorded or made available are provided on a nondiscriminatory basis.

Americans with Disabilities Act

In accordance with the mission of the Technical College of the Lowcountry to provide quality affordable education to all citizens of the service area, the College complies with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities (ADA). The President of the Technical College of the Lowcountry has appointed an ADA Coordinator and established an ADA committee to implement procedures in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA contacts are: Director of Student Support Services (843-525-8228) and Vice President of Finance (843-525-8251).

The Technical College of the Lowcountry provides access, equal opportunity and reasonable accommodation in its services, programs, activities, education and employment for individuals with disabilities. To request disability accommodation, contact the counselor for students with disabilities at (843) 525-8228 during the first ten business days of the academic term.

Complaints

Concerns or complaints may arise that are outside the scope of the grievance procedure or that cannot be resolved by communication with the Technical College of the Lowcountry MA Program faculty. Individuals may use the "Contact TCL" link on the TCL web page to file such concerns. Remarks submitted via the website are first read by a member of the TCL public relations department. The public relations department will forward the complaint to the appropriate personnel. Complaints against the MA Program, are forwarded to the Health Sciences Division Dean, who then discusses the issue with the MA Program Director. Once an investigation is completed, the MA Program Director, the Division Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs review the findings and determine the appropriate course of action. Documentation regarding complaints is stored with the Program Director and the Dean.

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The Medical Assistant Program

Program Summary

The TCL Medical Assisting program prepares graduates in three-semester with 40-credit-hours. Courses includes general education, science and medical assisting that are taught in the classroom, and various clinical sites within a 60-mile radius. Students must complete 160 hours of off-campus clinical experiences as part of curriculum in order to graduate and become eligible to take a credentialing examination. Students will be awarded a medical assisting certificate in health science upon satisfactory completion.

Medical Assistants are multi-skilled health professionals specifically educated to work mostly in ambulatory settings performing administrative and clinical duties under the supervision of a physician. The practice of medical assisting directly influences the public's health and well-being and requires mastery of a complex body of knowledge and specialized skills. Duties include (but are not limited to) making appointments, coding & billing insurances, vital signs, preparing patients for physical examination, phlebotomy, performing laboratory work, EKG, and other duties.

Program Philosophy

The philosophy of the Medical Assistant (MA) Program is consistent with the mission of the Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL). The MA Program faculty serve the profession, community and society. Both TCL and the MA Program strive to create an atmosphere of excellence in teaching and learning. Within the college's open atmosphere of shared values, the MA Program encourages creativity, innovation, and resourcefulness among its students and faculty. With these commitments, a positive, student-centered environment is created and individuals are empowered to learn and develop throughout their lifetimes.

Medical Assistant education uses professional, scientific, and clinical application teachings to provide students with the opportunities to meet their learning needs. It is the responsibility of the faculty to develop, implement, and evaluate the program and to promote an environment that fosters mutual respect and the development of self-initiated personal and professional goals. It is the responsibility of the student to be an active, committed partner in the educational process by critically examining information and reflecting upon concepts, beliefs, and ideas. Only through this partnership will both student and program outcomes be achieved.

Program Mission

The mission of the Medical Assistant Program at Technical College of the Lowcountry is to provide the community with highly trained, competent Medical Assistants. To support this mission, the goal of the program is to provide a comprehensive curriculum to prepare the student with the knowledge and abilities necessary for entry-level practice and to provide eligibility to successfully sit for a national credentialing exam.

Program Outcomes

The Medical Assistant program at TCL will cross-train students to perform administrative and clinical duties requiring success in the Standards and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Educational Programs in Medical Assisting adopted by the American Association of Medical Assistants(AAMA) Medical Assisting Education Review Board (MAERB) and the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs(CAAHEP). This program will also follow and require student success of the Educational Competencies for the Medical Assistant (ECMA) created by (MAERB) which will be used in a variety of ways by the educators.

Administrative Duties (may include, but not limited to):

Using computer applications
Answering telephones
Greeting patients
Updating and filing patient medical records
Coding and filling out insurance forms
Scheduling appointments
Arranging for hospital admissions and laboratory services
Handling correspondence, billing, and bookkeeping

Clinical Duties (may include, but not limited to):

Taking medical histories
Explaining treatment procedures to patients
Preparing patients for examination
Assisting the physician during exams
Collecting and preparing laboratory specimens
Performing basic laboratory tests
Instructing patients about medication and special diets
Preparing and administering medications as directed by a physician
Authorizing prescription refills as directed
Drawing blood
Taking electrocardiograms
Removing sutures and changing dressings

Patient Liaison | Medical assistants are instrumental in helping patients feel at ease in the physician's office and often explain the physician's instructions.

PCMH Team Member | Medical assistants are essential members of the Patient-Centered Medical Home team. According to a survey by the Healthcare Intelligence Network, medical assistants ranked as one of the top five professionals necessary to the PCMH team.

Program Goals

- At successful completion and conclusion of program 100% of students will be entry level medical assistants
- 80% of graduates will pass a national credentialing exam on the first attempt.
- 75% of graduates who seek employment as an MA will be employed with 6 months of passing the credentialing exam
- 85% of employers responding to the Employer Survey will rate TCL new graduate employees as either Neutral (acceptable), Agree, or Strongly Agree with declarations that state they meet or exceed expectation for all items listed under Cognitive Domain
- 85% of employers responding to the Employer Survey will rate TCL new graduate employee as either Neutral (acceptable), Agree, or Strongly Agree with declarations that state they meet or exceed expectation for all items listed under Psychomotor Domain
- 85% of employers responding to the Employer Survey will rate TCL new graduate employees as either Neutral (acceptable), Agree, or Strongly Agree with declarations that state they meet or exceed expectation for all items listed under Affective Domain

Program Curriculum

The Medical Assistant (MA) Program at Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL) is a rigorous and challenging curriculum. The curriculum is designed as a progression of increasing complexity. Pre-requisites and co-requisites thus have been established for each technical course within the program. In order to complete the program as outlined all MA courses (indicated with the course abbreviation MED) should be taken in the semester indicated below:

PROGRAM COURSES

COURSE NUMBER & TITLE CREDITS

AHS 102 Medical Terminology 3.00
BIO 112 Basic Anatomy and Physiology 4.00
CPT 170 Microcomputer Applications . 030
ENG 101 English Composition I 3.00
MED 103 Medical Assisting Introduction 3.00
MED 104 Medical Assisting Administrative Procedures 4.00
MED 109 Medical Business Records 3.00
MED 112 Medical Assisting Pharmacology 2.00
MED 113 Basic Medical Laboratory Techniques 3.00
MED 114 Medical Assisting Clinical Procedures 4.00
MED 117 Clinical Practice 5.00
MED 124 Medical Computer Practicum 3.00

Suggested Curriculum:

Version I

FALL/SPRING SEMESTER I (6-7 CREDITS EACH)

AHS 102 Medical Terminology 3.00
BIO 112 Basic Anatomy and Physiology 4.00
CPT 170 Microcomputer Applications 3.0
ENG 101 English Composition I 3.00

FALL SEMESTER II

MED 103 Medical Assisting Introduction 3.00
MED 104 Medical Assisting Administrative Procedures 4.00
MED 112 Medical Assisting Pharmacology 2.00

SPRING SEMESTER II

MED 109 Medical Business Records 3.00
MED 113 Basic Medical Laboratory Techniques 3.00
MED 114 Medical Assisting Clinical Procedures 4.00

SUMMER SEMESTER II

MED 117 Clinical Practice 5.00
MED 124 Medical Computer Practicum 3.00

Version II

FALL SEMESTER

AHS 102 Medical Terminology 3.00
BIO 112 Basic Anatomy and Physiology 4.00

MED 103 Medical Assisting Introduction 3.00
MED 104 Medical Assisting Administrative Procedures 4.00
MED 112 Medical Assisting Pharmacology 2.00

SPRING SEMESTER

CPT 170 Microcomputer Applications 3.0
ENG 101 English Composition I 3.00
MED 109 Medical Business Records 3.00
MED 113 Basic Medical Laboratory Techniques 3.00
MED 114 Medical Assisting Clinical Procedures 4.00

SUMMER SEMESTER

MED 117 Clinical Practice 5.00
MED 124 Medical Computer Practicum 3.00

Standards for Progression and Graduation

1. Progression in the Medical Assisting program is dependent on satisfying course prerequisites, co-requisites and maintaining a grade of "C" or better for all courses in the curriculum. No course in the Medical Assisting curriculum may be taken more than twice without meeting the criteria for academic forgiveness and admission. All courses in the major of MA must be completed within a three-year period from date of entry.
2. All courses must have prerequisites completed prior to progressing in the program. See the current college catalog and academic health science advisor.
3. **Students will be required to submit to drug testing upon entrance to the program and periodically throughout the program. Additionally, a student may be required to submit to drug testing at the request of the clinical facility, Dean of Health Sciences, or Program Director. The cost for the drug testing will be the student's responsibility.**

Refer to the Health Sciences Division Handbook for further information on Standards for Academic Progress.

Re-entry into the MA Program

PROGRAM REENTRY

The MA program does not offer a reentry option. Students who are admitted but do not complete the program are eligible to reapply to the program if they meet admission criteria. Students who reapply shall also only be considered once all new student applications are reviewed and there is available seating.

Course Exam Procedures

The following guidelines are enforced during examinations given in the classroom.

1. Only instructor approved electronic devices and calculators are allowed on the desk. Usage during class time should be only assigned or approved research determined by instructor.
2. If a student must leave the room during a test, the test is turned in as complete prior to leaving. Students may not leave and return.
3. If a student wishes to speak with a proctor during an exam, he/she must raise his/her hand and wait for the proctor to approach. The proctor/faculty will not answer questions about the test while it is being administered.
4. Testing accommodations for students with learning disabilities can only be made based on written documentation from the TCL ADA Officer. It is the student's responsibility to

contact the ADA Officer (843-525-8219) to make an appointment for evaluation.

5. The proctor may institute additional testing procedures.
6. Students unable to attend a scheduled exam must notify the course coordinator prior to the exam administration. Students who arrive more than 10 minutes after an exam has started may not be allowed to take the exam and may receive a grade of 0.

Grading Methodology

1. All assignments are due on the date scheduled and no late assignments will be accepted. A grade of "0" will be given if projects or assignments are not turned in on time. If you are not going to attend class then you must turn the assignment in to the instructor prior to date due or scan and email it by the day it is due.
2. A grade of '0' will be recorded for missed tests except under extenuating circumstances. In order for a makeup test to be considered, a written excuse must be presented to the instructor (i.e. doctor, ER physician, jury duty, accident report).
3. If a lecture by a guest speaker is missed the student will be required to write a comprehensive term paper on the information covered. The term paper will be due within 1 week of the time missed.
4. If a student is absent on an assigned presentation date, a zero will automatically be given for the presentation grade except under extenuating circumstances which must be approved by the instructor.
5. A minimum score of 80% must be met on all psychomotor and affective domain objectives (skill). Three (3) attempts will be allowed per skill / objective. The student must successfully complete the 3rd objective attempt before the end of the semester.
6. If the objective is to be repeated, the highest possible recorded grade will be an 80%. If the objective is not passed on the third attempt, the grade received is the grade recorded.
7. Repeat attempts of any psychomotor and affective objectives (skills) will be scheduled at the instructor's discretion.
8. The final grade must be 78.000 or more in order to pass the course and progress in the program.
9. Grades are posted on Blackboard within one week of administration of tests and examinations.
10. Students enrolled in classes taught online or have an online component are expected to attend on campus activities, such as testing, labs, and/or presentations as determined by program faculty.

Academic Misconduct

(See TCL student handbook and course syllabi)

Health care professionals hold the public trust. Academic misconduct by health science students calls that trust into question and academic integrity is expected. Academic misconduct may result in withdrawal for related health science courses. Also, depending on the severity of the student's academic misconduct, the student will not only be withdrawn from the program, but will not be allowed for re-entry and/or reapplication to all Health Science programs.

There is no tolerance at TCL for academic dishonesty and misconduct. The College expects all students to conduct themselves with dignity and to maintain high standards of responsible citizenship.

It is the student's responsibility to address any questions regarding what might constitute academic misconduct to the course instructor for further clarification.

The College adheres to the Student Code for the South Carolina Technical College System. Copies of the Student Code and Grievance Procedure are provided in the TCL Student Handbook, the Division Office, and the Learning Resources Center.

It is a fundamental requirement that any work presented by students will be their own. Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to):

1. Copying the work of another student or allowing another student to copy working papers, printed output, electronic files, quizzes, tests, or assignments.
2. Completing the work of another student or allowing another student to complete or contribute to working papers, printed output, electronic files, quizzes, tests, or assignments.
3. Viewing another student's computer screen during a quiz or examinations.
4. Talking or communicating with another student during a test.
5. Violating procedures prescribed by the instructor to protect the integrity of a quiz, test, or assignment.
6. Plagiarism in any form, including, but not limited to: copying/pasting from a website, textbook, previously submitted student work, or any instructor-prepared class material; obvious violation of any copyright-protected materials.
7. Knowingly aiding a person involved in academic misconduct.
8. Providing false information to staff and/or faculty.
9. Entering an office unaccompanied by faculty or staff.
10. Misuse of electronic devices.

Classroom Computer Policy

Only assigned computer activity will be conducted during class time. If a student is observed accessing a computer for any reason other than assigned activities, the instructor can mark student absent from class or dismiss student if behavior continues. Exceptions will be made on an individual basis and must be discussed with the instructor prior to the start of class.

Cell Phone and Electronic Devices Policy

All cell phones and electronic devices including smart watches (other than required for class activities) will be turned off and stored before class starts. If a student's cell phone rings or if a student is observed texting or engaging in any other cell phone activity during class time, the instructor can deduct attendance from the student and/or ask the student to leave.

Students may not record lectures unless permission is granted from the instructor prior to each class recorded. If a student is found to have recorded an instructor or class member without permission, the student risks removal from the program.

Exceptions will be made on an individual basis and must be discussed with the instructor prior to the start of class.

Attendance

1. Students will be expected to accept their responsibility for successful completion of course objectives and to demonstrate sincere interest in professional development by attendance at every scheduled class and lab.
2. When a student is unable to attend class due to illness, death in the family, etc., that student will be responsible for notifying the instructor (not sending a message with another student) prior to the class or lab from which the student will be absent.
3. Any student absent from class is responsible for:
 - a. Obtaining all handouts
 - b. Acquiring material discussed in the missed class by contacting a classmate before class to assist with notes taken, etc.
 - c. Submitting assignments due
 - d. Understanding **any** quizzes cannot be made up (unless extenuating circumstances exist with proper documentation).

4. A total of 2 unexcused absences from lecture, lab or a combination of these will be permitted without penalty. (See tardy and early departure policy below.) Each absence, tardy or early departure thereafter from either lecture or lab will result in the deduction of points from the student's final grade (professionalism).
5. Any student who is late for class should enter quietly as to not disrupt activities already in progress or other students in the learning process. The program faculty expects that students will be on time for each and every class and lab. A student will be counted tardy if they are 1 to 10 minutes late for class (according to clock in room where exam is being held). Tardiness of more than 10 minutes is considered an absence of one class period. Faculty expects students to remain in class for the entire period. An early departure is defined as leaving class before class is dismissed by the instructor. Two instances of unexcused tardy, or two of early departure or one tardy and one early departure will equal one absence.
6. If a student never attends or is absent for more than 10% of a class the student will be withdrawn per the attendance policy in the student handbook. Failure to attend class and/or withdrawal from class can negatively impact your financial assistance.

Program Expenses

Students are required to purchase the required text books and/or laboratory packets for each professional course, proper shoes, uniforms including lab jackets, a washable watch with a second hand, black and red pens, blood pressure cuffs and stethoscopes. Texts and lab packets for professional courses will have the (MED prefix). Students may also be required to purchase textbooks or supplies for general education courses.

Graduation/Licensure Expenses

The following items are expenses above and beyond tuition and books that students may expect to incur related to completing their program of choice

Graduation: Rental of cap and gown

Exam Fee Credentialing examination fee

Miscellaneous: Although not mandatory, it is occasionally suggested that students supplement their texts as needed for individual student success.

Medical Assistant Professionalism

American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA)

MA students are encouraged to join the American Medical Association (AAMA) as their first professional organization. The purpose of student involvement in the AAMA is to assume responsibility for contributing to the profession of Medical Assisting in order to provide for the highest quality of health care and to aid in the development of his/her professional role and responsibilities as a healthcare provider.

Guidelines for Professional Conduct

Students are expected to follow professional standards of conduct when in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings. Guidelines for these standards are as follows:

- Provisions of the South Carolina Medical Practice Act.
- American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) Code of Ethics. (See Appendix A)
- Policies and Procedures of the Division of Health Sciences and TCL.
- Policies and Procedures of the clinical facility (for clinical experiences and scheduled laboratory sessions within a clinical setting).

Professional Conduct in Patient Care Environments

Externships are held in patient care environments, students are expected to present a neat, professional appearance which includes personal grooming and compliance with both the TCL dress code and any additional requirements of the facility. Students demonstrating inappropriate behaviors in a patient care setting will be dismissed from the facility, undergo disciplinary procedures including possible dismissal from the program, and may be assessed grading penalties related to the behavior. During externship experiences, students whose behavior does not conform to professional standards of conduct may be dismissed from the clinical setting by either the facility or the MA program director. A student who is pulled from a site and has to be placed in a second site can forfeit all hours completed from original site and may be responsible for obtaining a new site if reasons are found to be the fault of the student. Two dismissals or removals for a student's noncompliance with site or school rules will result in removal from the program. A student whose behavior threatens or endangers the wellbeing of the patient will be terminated from the program and a grade of "F" will be issued for the course.

Personal Appearance

Throughout the Medical program, the development of professional behaviors is emphasized. This includes professional appearance. Because guests (lecturers, patients/clients, family members, prospective students, and more) frequently visit our department and program at a variety of times, it is necessary to put forth a professional image. It is equally important that students be appropriately attired when attending off campus activities. Even though professional attire can vary significantly, the department views the following as a minimum standard for professional attire in courses/classes, lab sessions, and field trips. Appropriate attire during clinical education experiences is stated below:

MED Classroom and Laboratory Attire

UNIFORM POLICY

The patient's first impression is primarily based on appearance. Patients have more confidence in a clinician who is well groomed and presents a professional appearance. Therefore, TCL MA Program adheres to the following student uniform policy related to all MED classes including externship.

ALL STUDENTS

1. Name pins and TCL photo ID are to be worn on campus.
2. Students must be in required, properly fitting uniform and comply with all regulations of the Medical Assisting program of study. White clinical lab coats with TCL patch on left sleeve are to be worn during all lab activities and during externship as necessary. Patch must be replaced if it becomes faded. Scrub jackets are optional. If scrub jacket is worn it must be the same color as the uniform with a patch on the left sleeve and be worn with name pin and TCL photo ID. White lab coats are still required even if scrub jackets are purchased.
3. Student uniforms are to be worn for all class and lab sessions. Students may wear the student uniform only during activity associated with the college program.
4. Uniforms must be clean, pressed and in good repair.
5. Undergarments are required, must provide appropriate coverage, and be color-coordinated with uniform or not visible.
6. Safe footwear that is not perforated or permeable is mandatory. Plain black or white leather shoes with black or white shoelaces, no color logos and/or designs, are suggested. Entire foot must be covered. No sandals, canvas, or open toe shoes. Running shoes containing mesh are not permitted.
7. Clinical facilities may have different uniform requirements than detailed in this policy.
8. Visible tattoos need to be covered at all times on campus and during externship.
9. Jewelry must be kept to a minimum. Earrings are to be studs only (no larger than 10-13mm), a watch with a second hand, and wedding or engagement rings only. If necklaces must be worn for sentimental or religious reasons they must be tucked under a crew neck tee shirt for safety purposes. No additional visible body jewelry may be worn during class or during externship.
10. Hair must be arranged in a style that keeps it secured and off the collar. Fasteners should be of neutral color. Bows or ornate fasteners are not appropriate.
11. For patient safety, fingernails must be of fingertip length, neatly trimmed, filed, and clean. Students may wear clear unchipped nail polish. Acrylic, gel, or silk wrap nails are not allowed.
12. No chewing gum in MED clinical settings or externship.
13. Students must adhere to the smoking policy of the TCL campus and clinical facility in which they are placed. Smoking is highly discouraged by all health care professionals and if a student smokes, care must be taken to remove odors from clothing, skin and hair prior to entry of the Health Sciences building or clinical facility.
14. Proper personal and oral hygiene are required. Since practicing as a medical assistant involves close physical contact with patients, during clinical experiences students are required to maintain professional standards of hygiene and grooming at all times. Daily showering/bathing, use of unscented deodorant, clean clothing, well-groomed haircut, and conservatively trimmed hair including mustache and beard, are required of all students at all times. Because some students and patients may be sensitive to scent, grooming products used should be unscented and colognes and perfumes should not be used.

FEMALES

Females should wear properly fitting scrubs with college patch on the left sleeve. Patch must be replaced if it becomes faded. Tops must have proper fitting neckline. If long V-neck tops are worn, a plain white, short-sleeved, or long sleeved crew or mock neck shirt is to be worn under scrub top.

MALES

Males should wear properly fitting white scrubs with college patch on the left sleeve. Patch must be replaced if it becomes faded. Tops must proper fitting neckline. If long V-neck tops are worn, a plain white, short sleeved, or long sleeved crew or mock neck shirt to be worn under scrub top.

Name pins may be purchased from Uniforms for the Low Country, 1400-A Ribaut Rd., Port Royal, 843-524-9355 or Buff's, 1507 Salem Rd., Beaufort, and 843-524-3600. Orders should be placed at least 3 weeks prior to start of clinical.

Students may also opt to have their names professionally embroidered on the top left side of the scrub tops above any pocket.

MA Laboratory

Laboratory Partners

In the clinical setting, students will treat a wide variety of patients. To help prepare students for this diversity in clinical practice, students will be required to practice laboratory activities with all classmates.

MA laboratory sessions are designed to recreate the clinical setting. It is thus important that each student in the laboratory setting be afforded the same courtesy, dignity and respect that would be provided to a patient receiving professional services. Lab sessions addressing specific areas of anatomy will require that the associated body parts be exposed. It is the obligation of each student to provide proper positioning and draping for his or her laboratory partner.

Photographs

Photographs of classmates with prior permission may be taken during lab sessions if they do not disrupt the class. Any photographs taken during lab are for personal viewing only and may not be posted on any internet sites or other media outlets without written permission of the program director and all persons included in the photograph. Posting of photographs without such permission is grounds for dismissal from the program.

MA Externship

Overview of the TCL Clinical Education/Externship

Externship experiences are an integral and vital part of preparing MA students for clinical practice. Clinical education allows students to integrate theories from the basic and clinical sciences with patient care. At the same time, students involved in clinical education refine didactic skills, acquire knowledge, and develop professional values. When engaged in externship, MA students work with experienced medical professionals who act as clinical instructors.

The following class is designated to offer externship/clinical education within the MA curriculum:

MED 117: Clinical Practice-up 10 weeks, Externship Education (160 hours)

Specific dates and times for each student's clinical experience will be provided to students before the start of the appropriate semester. The assigned site and the student will determine the schedule based on the sites availability to monitor the student and all hours must be completed within the ten-week time frame. Schedules are subject to change at the discretion of the site and or the MA program director. Students may not adjust their schedule without approval of the MA Program director.

Attendance

In the event of an unavoidable clinical absence, the student must comply with the following protocol:

1. Students are required to follow the "call-out" procedures of the clinical facility to which they are assigned.
2. In addition, the student must telephone the MA Program no later than 8 am of the clinical day that will be missed.
3. Failure to follow these procedures will result in course failure. "No call, no show" during a clinical assignment is unprofessional conduct and the student will be withdrawn from the program.

In the event of missed clinical hours, students will be required to make-up clinical education time as deemed appropriate MA Program director or Externship coordinator. TCL academic faculty encourage any missed clinical education hours to be made-up whenever possible. Make-up hours are scheduled at the convenience of the clinical site.

Clinical Education Schedule

Students are expected to attend all scheduled clinical education hours. The specific hours of each clinical education experience will be determined by the clinical instructor. For many clinical sites, scheduled hours will include weekend and evening hours. The clinical instructor has the final authority when determining a student's schedule for clinical education.

Assignment of Clinical Education Sites

In order to provide students with varied and comprehensive clinical education experiences, various clinical sites within a wide geographical area are utilized as part of clinical education. Although clinical education sites are typically local, students may be placed in a 60 mile radius outside the local area or their home due to the availability of appropriate clinical slots. In such cases, the student will be responsible for all transportation. The MA program Director or Clinical Coordinator will assign students to clinical facilities based on site availability and curricular needs. Student preferences for clinical sites will be considered during the assignment process. This does not guarantee that a student will be assigned to a requested facility. The final

determination of clinical assignments is made by the MA program Director or Clinical Coordinator. Students are not permitted to negotiate with clinical sites for placement. Should a student wish to have a clinical site added to the listing of available clinical sites, the student should make such a request in writing to the MA program director with contact information of the person at the facility willing and able to negotiate a contract with TCL.

Family members attending the MA program may not be assigned to the same clinical environment. In addition, students may not be assigned to the same clinical environment in which themselves or a family member is employed. Students must obtain approval from the MA program director prior to assignment of a site in which any family member is assigned or employed.

The MA Program Director/Clinical Coordinator will provide the clinical sites with student assignments and applicable student information prior to the scheduled start of a clinical education assignment. The student information packet will include the following items: a completed copy of the Student Data Sheet, student performance evaluation forms, a copy of the appropriate syllabus, pertinent health records, drug screen, CPR card and a completed background check.

Conviction of a Crime

Students in the MA Program are required to have criminal background checks in order to complete clinical education assignments. Depending on the policies and procedures of the clinical site, conviction of a crime (other than a minor traffic violation) may make a student ineligible for scheduled clinical experiences. Students in the MA program must be eligible to complete their clinical education at available clinical education sites. This type of history can also make a student ineligible to take national credentialing exams and limit potential employment opportunities.

Clinical Site Visits by TCL MA Faculty

In addition to telephone communications, clinical site visits promote communication and interaction between the clinical education site and the TCL MA Program. Clinical site visits by any TCL Health sciences faculty member/clinical coordinator or program director. If an MA student is witnessed to be unprofessional it will be reported to the MA program director. Visits can also be made at any time by the request of the clinical instructor on site or the student if they feel it to be necessary. For clinical sites within the TCL four-county service region, MA faculty will make every effort to visit each student at least one time during each clinical education experience. Such visits will be scheduled at the convenience of the clinical facility. Faculty will document clinical site visits utilizing a *Clinical Site Visit Form*.

The responsibilities of the student are to:

1. Complete all necessary academic requirements leading up to the clinical education experience. Students not meeting these requirements as outlined in the MA and TCL Student Handbooks will not be permitted to enroll in clinical education courses.
2. Complete all necessary pre-clinical education requirements as outlined in the course syllabus, and the MA, Health Sciences Division, and TCL Student Handbooks.
3. Actively participate in the clinical site selection process.
4. Contact the clinical site to which they are assigned prior to the start of the clinical education experience. With this initial contact, students should introduce themselves and request information from the clinical site regarding the clinical schedule, dress code, potential interview etc.
5. Provide clinical sites with any required information including but not limited to contact information, immunization and health status, proof of insurance, etc.
6. Complete an additional Criminal Background Check if required by the site.

7. Participate in additional alcohol/drug screening processes or additional immunization processes if requested.
8. Comply with all policies and procedures of the clinical site including those related to smoking, phone use, dress code, personal appearance and behavior standards.
9. Attend all scheduled clinical education experiences as directed including any weekend or evening hours as assigned by the clinical education site. Students must be on time for all clinical education experiences. Tardiness will not be tolerated.
10. Adhere to the ethical standards of practice and conduct as outlined by: the South Carolina Medical Practice Act, the American Medical Association (AMA) Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Medical Assistant (See Appendix A), Policies and Procedures of the Division of Health Sciences and TCL, and the policies and procedures of clinical facilities.
11. Complete all required assignments and clinical evaluation forms per the course syllabus including instructor assigned exam preparation activities.

Student Accountability

During clinical education experiences, each student is a representative of the TCL MA Program. As such, students must comply with all TCL and MA Program policies when participating in clinical education. In addition, when students are at a clinical site, they are responsible for abiding by all policies and procedures of that clinical site.

Student Use of Downtime

Students will find that most of their time in a clinical facility is spent in direct patient care or in activities that relate directly to patient care, such as documentation. Should students find themselves in the position of having downtime while at a clinical site, they should offer their time to assist the clinical instructor or other members of the department. Should a student's assistance not be needed at that particular time, the student should engage in professional development activities such as reading a professional journal, learning about a specific intervention technique or condition, or if permitted, observing another professional at work. Students should not be making personal phone calls from the clinic, engaging in idle chatter while at the clinic or performing any other non-professional tasks (such as reading the paper, reading non-professional magazines, filing nails, etc) while at the clinical site. Students may not use cell phones except during scheduled breaks.

Student Dress Code and Personal Appearance

When in the clinical setting, students' apparel and grooming must conform to health, sanitation, and safety standards. Students thus must adhere to the MA Program uniform requirements.

Safety

For a complete overview of campus security procedures refer to the *TCL Student Handbook* which is available online at www.tcl.edu.

Laboratory Safety and Informed Consent

The purpose of laboratory-based clinical training in MA education is to allow students to develop safe and competent performance in administering Medical measurement and intervention procedures before applying these techniques to patients in a clinic. Students in the MA program thus participate in a variety of educational activities that require them to role play as a “medical assistant” and as a “patient”. Activities include, but are not limited to participation in EKG, vital signs, throat culture, needle handling, physical activities such as lifting, carrying, using crutches and wheelchairs; forms of physical exertion. Although carried out as a part of the typical coursework in a MA program, participation in these activities may involve some degree of risk. It is the responsibility of each student to exercise common sense and judgment while engaged in learning activities. If for any reason a student is uncomfortable regarding the safety of an activity, it is the responsibility of that student to consult with an instructor prior to engaging in the activity. Students must sign the *Laboratory Consent Form* prior to participating in laboratory activities. A copy of this form is included in Appendix B of this handbook.

All laboratory equipment used for skill development must be used under the supervision, or with the approval of, MA faculty members. MA faculty members will check equipment safety prior to use in scheduled laboratory sessions. All equipment is to be inspected and necessary calibration performed on an as-needed basis. All relevant operating instructions will be kept in the Equipment File.

The MA Program maintains accessible Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS/SDS) for all chemicals used within laboratory sessions.

General Safety Rules

1. Students should be aware of evacuation procedures and the location of fire extinguishers.
2. Hazardous conditions, broken equipment and defective tools should be reported to the instructor, the MA Program Director, or the Division’s Administrative Assistant.
3. Never overload electrical circuits.
4. Never use chairs, carts, tables, counters, boxes, or other substitutes for ladders or work platforms.
5. Obtain operating instructions for all unfamiliar equipment. After use, put all equipment back in the proper place. Disconnect all electrical cords by grasping the plug and carefully disengaging.
6. Wipe up all spills immediately, regardless of who caused the spill. If unable to completely clean up the spill or if the floor remains slick after cleaning up the spill, report the area to the Division’s Administrative Assistant. She will then contact the appropriate personnel for the clean-up.
7. The use of alcoholic beverages, narcotic drugs, or derivatives thereof on College property or at a college function is strictly prohibited.
8. If students are uncertain about any situation, they should consult with a faculty member before proceeding with an activity.

Serious Injury or Illness Procedures

In the event of a serious injury or illness requiring immediate, emergency medical attention while on campus, activate the Emergency system by dialing 9-911 from any College phone. After contacting 911, report the incident to Campus Security at 986-6971 or 525-8301. Please

remember to dial 9 in order to obtain an outside line. If appropriate and the student has the background and training required, students should provide emergency first aid following universal precautions in handling body fluids including wearing of gloves and disposing of supplies properly. A small first aid kit is located in the Division's Main Office on the first floor of the Health Sciences Building. Please refer to the TCL Student Handbook related to further requirements regarding accident reporting.

Physical Plant/Building Problems

For any building or physical plant problem, notify the Division's Administrative Assistant and she will notify the appropriate personnel. This would include plumbing problems, spills, blown fuses or other electrical problems, heating/air conditioning malfunctioning, and ventilation problems.

Safety Procedures at Clinical Education Sites

When attending a scheduled clinical education experience or a field trip at a clinical site, students should follow the fire and other safety procedures of each clinical site. Such procedures will be reviewed with the student as part of the student orientation process. In the event of an emergency during a clinical education experience, the clinical facility will provide access to health care services through the facility's emergency room or through the 911 system. In the event that a student requires health care services, the student assumes all financial responsibility for those services.

Appendix A

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

Appendix B

**Technical College of the Lowcountry
Medical Assistant Program
Student Consent Form**

Name _____
(Please Print)

Phone _____

Address _____

Student ID # _____

As a student in the Medical Assistant (MA) Program, you will be participating in a variety of educational activities including, but not limited to, EKG, vital signs, throat culture, needle handling, physical activities such as lifting, carrying, using crutches and wheelchairs; forms of physical exertion. Although carried out as a part of normal coursework in the MA program, participation in these activities may involve some degree of risk. It is each student's responsibility to exercise common sense and judgment while engaged in learning activities. If you are for any reason uncomfortable regarding the safety of an activity due to personal limitations, you are expected to consult with an Instructor prior to engaging in that activity.

I certify that I have read the above, and understand the hazards to be faced by program participants. Notwithstanding said dangers, I freely and voluntarily accept such risks involved in such activities, and agree to hold Technical College of the Lowcountry and all of their officers, staff, and faculty free from liability in the event I suffer either personal or property injury or damage, because of, or in the course of, participating in program activities.

Signature **(in ink)** **Date**

**Technical College of the Lowcountry
Medical Assisting Program**

STUDENT AGREEMENT

I, _____ have received, read, understand, and agree to abide by the policies and guidelines related to Medical Assisting. This includes but is not limited to reading and ensuring my understanding of the division handbook, this program handbook, and all course syllabi each semester. I also understand that any policy may updated as necessary at any point during program attendance for any reason. I understand that I will be provided an addendum for each update and will have to sign additional agreement statements accordingly.

DATE: _____ SIGNATURE: _____

NOTE: This agreement will be placed in your file and kept for length of the program. Please keep a copy for your records.