

Health and Public Safety Division Online Program Overview Information

Medical Assistant Program

*Congratulations on your decision to pursue a degree as a **Medical Assistant**. It is an excellent profession to pursue...one worth the hard work that the educational process requires. As part of the admission process for the program, you are required to read through the material presented on this website. Please be aware that you must read **ALL** of the material, complete and turn in all the required forms to Western Technical College in order to meet the requirement of successfully completing the mandatory online program overview.*

*The admission requirements are subject to change without notice. This website will be updated at a minimum on October 15 and February 15 of each year.

Purpose of Online Program Overview

- Explain admission process for the program
- Provide specific program information
- Help to confirm your decision to enter the program
- Provide you with forms necessary for completing the admission process.

The Admission Process

Review the [Intent to Enroll Form](#) to identify and complete the admission requirements for your program.

Step I – Application to the College

1. **Application to the College:** Complete and submit the Wisconsin Technical College System application. If you are interested in more than one program, you must complete an application for each program. A one time \$30.00 application fee (made payable to Western) must be submitted with the application. Applications are available at Western in the Welcome Center, 400 Seventh Street North at the La Crosse Campus or any Regional Learning Center locations at Independence, Black River Falls, Tomah, Mauston, or Viroqua. Applications are also available online at <http://www.westerntc.edu/admissions>.
2. Submit **official transcripts** from high school and, if applicable, college. If submitting college transcripts, it is possible that you may have taken courses that can be applied towards your chosen program. To have your transcript evaluated for transfer of credit, complete and submit the Transfer Credit Evaluation form found under Transfer Forms at <http://www.westerntc.edu/transfer>.
3. **Placement tests** (COMPASS, ASSET, or ACT)
You are required to take a placement test and meet the set scores unless the following applies:
 - If you have a bachelors or masters degree, you are not required to take placement tests.
 - If you have successfully completed (C grade or better) college level Written Communication or Beginning Composition, you are not required to take the Writing placement test.

Subject to change without notice.

- If you have successfully completed (C grade or better) college level Basic Math or College Mathematics, you are not required to take the Math placement test.

Satisfactory placement scores for the Medical Assistant program can be obtained online at: http://www.westerntc.edu/programs/program.aspx?PROGRAM_NBR=315091 under the Admission Requirements tab.

Testing is available in La Crosse at the Western Technical College Campus Assessment Center or at the Regional Learning Centers in Independence, Black River Falls, Tomah, Mauston, or Viroqua. Visit the following website at <http://www.westerntc.edu/admissions/assessment.asp> for more information. If you take a placement test at another location, you must request that your scores be sent to Western.

Remediation courses are available for you if you do not meet the placement scores for the program. All remediation courses must be completed prior to being accepted to the program. Students must retest after remediation.

Step II – Application to the Program

1. **Complete this Online Program Overview**: You are doing this right now and are almost done. You must complete the **Intent to Enroll Form** (click to open) when you are prepared to begin your program of choice. Review the form to identify and complete the admission requirements specific to your program.

Please assure that all items have been completed, attached, and/or submitted to: Enrollment Services located in the Welcome Center on the La Crosse Campus. Call Enrollment Services at 608-785-9553 to schedule an appointment to review your paperwork with an Enrollment Services Advisor. **You are only allowed to submit the Intent to Enroll form at your mandatory Enrollment Services Advisor meeting.** Bring the Intent to Enroll form to your appointment with any un-submitted documentation. At this appointment, the Enrollment Services Advisor will finalize the admission process and provide you with an estimated start date. **At this time you will sign the second page of the Intent to Enroll form verifying that you have completed the requirements to enter the program and have been assigned an estimated start date.**

If you are unable to begin the program on the assigned start date, you will need to re-submit the Intent to Enroll Form and schedule another appointment. Students are unable to request a pass on their assigned date. They will be assigned a later start date upon resubmission of the Intent to Enroll Form.

2. Meet **reading requirement** as noted in Step I item 3.
3. Meet **math requirement** as noted in Step I item 3.
4. Meet **writing requirement** as noted in Step I item 3.
5. Read the **Essential Functions** (click to open). Essential Functions are a listing of the physical, cognitive, and mental abilities that you will need in order to complete the program. You must read the Essential Functions and complete the appropriate section on page two of the Intent to Enroll Form. If you have a documented disability, there may be accommodations that can be made to assist in your successful completion of the program. Please contact Disability Services at Western

Subject to change without notice.

(608-785-9875) if you are in need of more information. **A change in your ability to perform any of the Essential Functions must be reported to the Associate Dean (608-785-9195) or to your instructor immediately.**

6. Complete [Immunization Form](#) (click to open): The immunization information can usually be obtained from your personal physician. **IMPORTANT:** The immunization form **MUST** be signed by a physician, physician assistant, nurse, or nurse practitioner.

You must have documentation of a negative TB test for the past two years. If you do not have two consecutive years of TB testing, you must have a “two-step” TB test done. TB tests are done at your local physician’s office, county health departments or (for current Western students taking at least 6 credits) at the UW-L Student Health Center located at the Health Science Center in La Crosse. You are required to maintain current TB tests until you graduate from the program. (i.e., renewed annually)

It is your responsibility to submit immunization records including TB tests prior to or with the Intent to Enroll Form to Enrollment Services located in the Welcome Center so the documentation can be entered into your official student health record here at Western.

Hepatitis B series: Though **highly** recommended at this time it is your choice whether or not to have the series. If you elect to do the Hepatitis B series, you need to *start* the series, but do not have to *complete* the series in order to submit the immunization form. You must submit the remaining dates when the series is complete.

It is strongly recommended that you **maintain a copy** of all forms/verifications for your own personal record.

7. Complete the [Background Information Disclosure form](#) (click to open). The State of Wisconsin requires that individuals who will be working with vulnerable adults and/or children undergo a criminal background check. You must complete the form and submit the \$20 fee (made payable to Western Technical College) in order to meet this admission requirement. Western does not accept background checks conducted by third parties (i.e. your employer). You are required to disclose *all* past experiences with the law. **Any arrests or new charges must be reported to the Associate Dean (608-785-9195) within five (5) working days.** Failure to do so may result in program dismissal. In addition, if you have resided outside of Wisconsin in the past 3 years, you will be informed of how to obtain an out of state background check at your own expense.

Although the form itself refers to crimes, criminal convictions, and pending criminal charges, the information that comes back from the background check does include all contacts with law enforcement whether or not a criminal conviction occurred. Therefore, include contacts such as non-criminal traffic matters, arrests, charges for which you were acquitted, and charges that were pled down to an ordinance violation or forfeiture. This form is found at <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/Forms/F8/F82064.pdf>.

If your background check reveals past experience with the law, two clinical sites will be contacted to determine the likelihood of your being able to complete a clinical experience at those sites.

Clinical sites have the right to refuse clinical placement to any student based on the background check results. This information will assist you in understanding the likelihood of being able to complete the clinical courses for the program. If you have charges on your background check, we are unable to guarantee that you will be able to be placed for the multiple clinical experiences that most programs require. It is your decision whether or not to enter the

Subject to change without notice.

program based on the uncertainty of being accepted at clinical sites. See Frequently Asked Questions for more information on the impact of a positive background check.

(See page 7 for Body Art and Piercing.)

8. Attain **CPR certification**: You are required to complete the **American Heart Association Basic Life Support for the Healthcare Provider certification** and provide a copy (front and back) of your card. Note: There are many different levels of CPR; be sure to register for “**BLS Healthcare Provider**”. You are required to maintain on file your CPR certification until you graduate. This may mean that you may have to take a renewal class during your time at Western. Click on [CPR BLS Healthcare Provider courses](#) to view those being offered at Western.
9. A completed **First Aid course** is required for admission to the program and you are expected to keep your certification current throughout the program. Click on [First Aid course offerings](#) to view those being offered at Western.
10. Successfully **pass keyboarding test at 25 words per minute** (wpm). Testing is available and is free of charge at Western’s Campus Assessment Center (608-785-9566). Visit the following website at <http://www.westerntc.edu/admissions/assessment.asp> for more information on testing locations. You will need to make an appointment to test. You may also take the test online at **www.typingtest.com**. Please submit your test results to Enrollment Services at the Welcome Center.
11. If you have taken and passed Body Structure and Function or General Anatomy and Physiology with a grade of C or better, you may test out of Human Body in Health and Disease. There is a fee of \$100.00. If you are interested, contact Sandy Heinz at 608-785-9186.

Acceptance to a Program

Students will be admitted to this program once the student has completed the Intent to Enroll Form, met the program requirements and met with an Enrollment Services Advisor. Program admission is based upon a first come, first served basis. Once the program is filled, students will be admitted to the next term. If an opening occurs in an earlier term, you may be contacted.

In the event that the program is not full, applications will continue to be accepted until 3 weeks prior to the start of the program. Applicants who meet all admission requirements will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis until the program is full.

- ❖ It is to your advantage to complete the admission requirements as soon as possible.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Medical Assistant

The phrase “variety is the spice of life” is very appropriate for a career as a Medical Assistant.

Medical assistants may work in a variety of settings in a medical clinic. The responsibilities might include preparing the patient for physical examination, obtaining a health history, assisting the physician with the exam as well as minor or office surgery, performing various tests and procedures independently, as well as disinfecting and sterilizing equipment and instruments. Some medical assistants manage the office, arrange and confirm appointments, register patients, keep treatment records, send bills, receive payments, file insurance forms, handle the mail and keep inventory records.

The Medical Assistant program requires keyboarding skills as computers are now used for most clinic charting and record keeping. Basic algebra skills are required for medication dose calculation. The medical assistant is expected to be able to speak and interact with a wide variety of patients so communication skills are of utmost importance. This career also demands a willingness to help others and an ability to work with other health professionals as a valuable member of the health care team.

Pictures in this orientation show students practicing obtaining blood pressure readings, which is a very important function of a clinical medical assistant. Drawing blood and performing laboratory tests are also important skills that students learn and practice in the medical laboratory courses.

Job Outlook

There is a high demand for medical assistants and this demand is expected to continue. The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development lists medical assistant career at number 1 in the top 25 occupations that are projected to grow the fastest between now and 2012. The U.S. Department of Labor lists medical assistant career as number 3 in the top 10 fastest growing occupations through 2014.

According to this survey, approximately 6 out of 10 medical assistants work in offices of physicians. The starting salary in the western part of the state is \$11 - \$13 an hour or \$23,000 - \$27,000 annually. Experience as a medical assistant increases the salary.

Graduates of Western’s program are highly regarded in the local community and throughout the region. Recent graduates are working in La Crosse as well as within a 50 mile radius of La Crosse, some are working in Madison, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, and some found jobs as far away as Wyoming and Alaska.

Program Information

Medical Assistant Program Goal: To prepare competent entry-level Medical Assistants in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains.

This is a two-semester program. During the first semester, the student completes the basic or foundational courses. The student gains clinical experience in the second semester as well as continuing to build on the skills learned in first semester. The first semester schedule can be modified to meet the student's needs. Some students take two semesters completing the first semester courses. However, the Clinical Procedures 1 and Medical Laboratory 1 courses must be taken at the same time, and the same is true for Clinical Procedures 2 and Medical Laboratory 2 courses.



The clinical experiences of the second semester are where the student applies classroom content in the actual patient care setting. The first part of the semester is spent in the classroom. The final six weeks of the semester are completely blocked for clinical experience with the student at the clinic 40 hours each week.

January and August are currently the two starting times for Western's Medical Assistant Program. The August two-semester start would follow the usual academic schedule with graduation in May. The students starting the two-semester schedule in January

would complete the program in December. There are currently very few courses available in the summer. Please check Western [course schedule](#) under Curriculum tab or contact an Enrollment Services Advisor for specific course availability information. A copy of the curriculum and Enrollment Services Advisor names and contact information are found later in this orientation also.

Can I continue to work during school?

This program may be short in length compared to other career programs but it is also very intense. It is therefore strongly recommended that a student work no more than 20 hours a week during the first semester and be ready to reduce even more the second semester. Most students find that working every other weekend is the most they can manage and that may be too demanding for some.

Method of Course Offerings

Courses in the program are offered in a variety of methods. Some courses are offered only online; some are traditional lecture, while others are combined lecture and laboratory while also being supplemented with online assignments and resources. A copy of the curriculum can be found at the end of the orientation.

Online Requirements

Program courses are offered in a variety of methods, including face-to-face or blended online. **You will need to have access to a computer for all of your courses.** When taking a blended online course, students should plan on spending at least as much time with the material for a blended online course as they would in a regular classroom. There are specific expiration (due) dates for assignments that are controlled by the course management software. If assignments are not completed on time, they will no longer be accessible online. Organization and time management skills, a reliable internet connection and regular communication with the instructor are essential for student success in a blended online course. If you are enrolling in your first online or blended course, you will be required to complete a series of online training modules prior to the start of the course. Information about this one-time training will be mailed two weeks before course begins.

Subject to change without notice.

Visit the Virtual College website at <http://www.westerntc.edu/onlinelearning/systemrequirements.asp> and refer to System Requirements

- Review the Recommended PC Platform. It is essential that you have an appropriate system, e-mail and internet connection to be successful in this program.
- Order the Microsoft Software package (Word, Excel, Access and Powerpoint) at student discount pricing. This is needed for students to gain access to lecture notes and lab activities on the program website.

Clinical Information

Students complete clinical experiences at a minimum of two clinical sites. The two La Crosse and Onalaska clinics (Gundersen Lutheran and Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Healthcare) are the primary clinical sites for the first part of second semester but numerous other clinics are also used. All clinical experiences will be located in the Western Technical College district and will be unpaid. The clinics used in the last part of the semester may necessitate travel to Spring Grove, Independence, Mauston, Black River Falls, or La Farge as examples. Students must have dependable transportation to all clinical sites.

Students will spend eight hours a day when assigned to a clinical site and while most days will begin at 8:00 a.m.; some laboratory assignments may require 5:30 a.m. starts.

Body Art or Piercing

In the Health and Public Safety Division, you may display no **Body Art or Piercing** that might be considered offensive. Most employment settings have policies that are generally broad, however they do reserve the right to deny employment and student clinical/practicum/fieldwork placement if body art or piercings are found to be offensive to those in that setting. The wearing and displaying of jewelry in the health care or public safety setting is generally limited to wrist watches and wedding rings or small non-dangling earrings. The purpose of this limitation is related to infection control, safety and public perception of the employees while they are on duty.

If you have significant visible body art and piercings, we are unable to guarantee that you will be able to be placed for the multiple clinical/practicum/fieldwork experiences that most programs require. You may be asked to cover the body art with clothing or dressings or remove the piercings in order to complete your rotation. If your program has a more restrictive policy on body art or piercings, it will be enforced. It is your decision whether or not to enter the program based on the uncertainty of being accepted at those sites.

Student Accident Insurance

All students involved in a practicum course as part of their program will be automatically enrolled in Western Technical College's Accident Only Insurance Plan.

This insurance covers injuries that you may incur on the way *to or from* any practicum experience, and any injury that you may sustain *at the practicum site while performing your practicum duties as a Western Technical College student*. This insurance ONLY covers you for injuries related to these student experiences; your choice of insurance for other portions of your life remains your responsibility. This insurance is considered a secondary insurance to any primary insurance you may have. There is no deductible for this coverage at this time. Once you are enrolled in your practicum course, your instructor will provide further information and details on how to obtain your insurance card. Answers to questions can be found at Gallagher Koster [website](#).

Subject to change without notice.

Specific Program Requirements

- A **watch with a second hand** will be required the second week of classes. Students receive further information about the uniform requirements during the first week of school. A **uniform, fluid resistant lab coat** and **goggles** are required but these can be purchased during the first semester. The uniform can be purchased at a local uniform store for about \$30. The nametag is provided for each student and an extra may be purchased for about \$5. The disposable fluid resistant lab coat and goggles can be purchased at Western’s Campus Shop for about \$15. When you purchase your uniform, don’t forget that you will need good **white walking shoes**.
- A dual head **stethoscope** is required for second semester. A dual head stethoscope will cost about \$30.
- While a blood pressure cuff is not required, many students find it very useful. This will cost about \$30-\$90.
- Students are responsible for their own transportation to clinical sites.
- The American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) Certification Examination is offered following graduation and the application fee is \$125. While this is not a license, certification is stressed as most clinics throughout the nation hire only Certified Medical Assistants (CMA).



- The Medical Assistant Program at Western Technical College 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 Programs
 1361 Park Street
 Clearwater, FL 33756
 727-210-2350

To learn more about the profession:

Check out the website of the American Association of Medical Assistants at www.aama-ntl.org.

Check out the website of the Wisconsin Society of Medical Assistants at www.wsma.net.

To learn more about the program at Western:

Contact Counselors, Enrollment Services Advisors or Program Heads.

Counselors can be reached at (608) 785-9553.

Enrollment Services Advisors:

- | | | |
|----------------|--|--------------|
| Sandy Peterson | PetersonS@westerntc.edu | 608-785-9207 |
| Deb Kaiser | KaiserD@westerntc.edu | 608-785-9078 |
| Stacey Nelson | NelsonS@westerntc.edu | 608-785-9842 |

Program Head:

Julie Czaplewski, ME-PD, CMA (AAMA) CzaplewskiJ@westerntc.edu

Subject to change without notice.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What happens if there is something on my background check?

First of all, it is very important that you be honest when completing the background check form. Some facilities may automatically refuse a student who is perceived to be less than truthful on the form. If a student has a positive background check (meaning that there is something in your background), two clinical sites will be contacted to determine the likelihood of accepting you for a clinical placement. You will be contacted regarding the response of the clinical sites so that you can make a decision as to whether or not to enter the program. Results of the inquiry to the clinical site is not a guarantee of being able to place you at every clinical site but will give you an indication of the likelihood of being able to be placed at some clinical site. It does not guarantee what will actually happen once you are in the program. It is your decision as to whether or not you want to enter the program.

2. Where can I go to get certified in CPR?

First of all, be very careful that you are signing up for the correct course. You need to complete **American Heart Association BLS Healthcare Provider** (Western catalog number 47-531419). Western Technical College offers many sections of American Heart Association BLS Healthcare Provider. Click on [CPR BLS Healthcare Provider courses](#) to view those being offered at Western. You may want to contact local hospitals/clinics.

3. I didn't get in for next semester, do I really have to wait another semester?

Yes, and no. If another student would not be able to start at their assigned time, we would contact the next applicant on the list. For this reason, it is VERY important that Western has your most current address and phone number so that we are able to contact you.

If you don't get in to the program this semester, you are strongly encouraged to complete your general studies prior to entering the program.

4. I didn't get in for next semester, is there anything I have to do in order to keep my application current?

Yes, students are required to:

- a. Submit updated TB results
- b. Maintain CPR certification
- c. Repeat the criminal background check if there has been a change.

5. I've been accepted for a certain semester but for whatever reason I can't start.

If you are unable to begin the program on the assigned start date, you will need to re-submit the Intent to Enroll form and schedule another appointment. You will be assigned a later start date upon resubmission of the Intent to Enroll form.

6. I've changed my mind about entering the program and want to enter a different Health and Public Safety Division program. What do I do?

If you change your mind on which program you would like to enter, complete a change of program form (available from Enrollment Services in the Welcome Center or click on link [Re-Entry/Change of Program form](#)). The good news is that if you are interested in another Health and Public Safety Division program many of the admission requirements (e.g. background check, immunization, etc) are applicable for other programs. However, you will be required to complete an online program overview session specific for the program as well as the Intent to Enroll Form.

Subject to change without notice.

7. I've taken some courses at a different college. Do I have to retake them?

Most students receive some credit for the courses that they have taken previously.

Students who have previous college coursework should complete a Request for Transfer Credit

Evaluation form (available from the Registrar or found under Transfer Forms at

<http://www.westerntc.edu/transfer> . You will be notified if the other college credits will be placed on your Western transcripts.

8. What if I'm trying to decide between more than one program?

Counselors and Enrollment Services Advisors at Western are available to discuss career planning with you.

9. Who do I contact if I have questions?

- Questions specific to a program, please contact program faculty:

Julie Czaplewski, ME-PD, CMA (AAMA) 608-789-6175

CzaplewskiJ@westerntc.edu

- Questions related to career decisions:

Contact a counselor at the Welcome Center 608-785-9553.

- Questions on your admission status:

Contact an Enrollment Services Advisor through email and include your name, ID # or birth date and your specific question to:

Sandy Peterson PetersonS@westerntc.edu

Deb Kaiser KaiserD@westerntc.edu

Stacey Nelson NelsonS@westerntc.edu

Last thoughts:

- You are responsible to make sure that you keep your contact information (address/phone number) current. Contact Enrollment Services at 785-9553 to let the College know of any changes or update your information on your MyWestern student account.
- Pay close attention to the deadlines for completing admission requirements for the program. The CPR requirement takes the most time to complete (and classes fill quickly!). If you have not completed CPR, then your first order of business should be to find a CPR class and get signed up. The second most time consuming admission requirement is immunizations. Start working on completing the form immediately.
- Students in a health or public safety program are required to have a C grade or better in all general studies and program courses. Please see the Student Planner on our website at <http://www.westerntc.edu/currentstudents/> and click on Student Planner for more information on College and Division policies.

Best wishes as you continue your journey towards entering a health or public safety program at Western Technical College. We look forward to working with you as you pursue a career in health or public safety.

Medical Assistant Curriculum Sequence

First Semester

P	I	B	Course Title	Credits
		●	509-301 Medical Assistant Administrative Procedures	2
●			509-302 Human Body in Health and Disease	3
			509-303 Medical Assistant Laboratory Procedures 1	2
			509-304 Medical Assistant Clinical Procedures 1	4
●	●	●	501-101 Medical Terminology	3
●		●	103-101 Introduction to Word 103-102 Introduction to Excel (Alternate courses accepted for transfer: 501-107 Introduction to Healthcare Computing (2 credits) or 154-104 Introduction to Microcomputers (3 credits))	1 1
			Total	16

Second Semester

P	I	B	Course Title	Credits
			509-305 Medical Assistant Laboratory Procedures 2	2
			509-306 Medical Assistant Clinical Procedures 2	3
		●	509-307 Medical Office Insurance and Finance	2
			509-308 Pharmacology for Allied Health	2
	●		509-309 Medical Law, Ethics and Professionalism	2
●			801-195 Written Communication	3
			509-310 Medical Assistant Practicum	3
			Total	17

Program Total = 33 Credits

P = can be taken prior to program acceptance

I = internet only classes

B = blended classes

Though this program is set-up for completion in two semesters, it is possible to take the courses over three semesters. The following would be the recommended course sequence. This allows for all pre-requisites and co-requisites to be taken first.

Medical Assistant Laboratory Procedures 1 must be taken at the same time as Medical Assistant Clinical Procedures 1. Also, Medical Assistant Laboratory Procedures 2 and the Medical Assistant Clinical Procedures 2 must also be taken at the same time.

Admission to the Medical Assistant Program is required for enrollment into any Medical Assistant courses beginning with #509 except Human Body in Health and Disease. Human Body in Health and Disease can be taken one semester prior to taking Medical Assistant Clinical Procedures 1 and Medical Assistant Laboratory Procedures 1.

First Semester

P	I	B	Course Title	Credits
•	•	•	501-101 Medical Terminology	3
•			509-302 Human Body in Health and Disease	3
•		•	103-101 Introduction to Word 103-102 Introduction to Excel (Alternate courses accepted for transfer: 501-107 Introduction to Healthcare Computing (2 credits) or 154-104 Introduction to Microcomputers (3 credits))	1 1
•			801-195 Written Communication	3
			Total	11

Second Semester

P	I	B	Course Title	Credits
		•	509-301 Medical Assistant Administrative Procedures	2
			509-303 Medical Assistant Laboratory Procedures 1	2
			509-304 Medical Assistant Clinical Procedures 1	4
	•		509-309 Medical Law, Ethics and Professionalism	2
			Total	10

Third Semester

P	I	B	Course Title	Credits
			509-305 Medical Assistant Laboratory Procedures 2	2
			509-306 Medical Assistant Clinical Procedures 2	3
		•	509-307 Medical Office Insurance and Finance	2
			509-308 Pharmacology for Allied Health	2
			509-310 Medical Assistant Practicum	3
			Total	12

Program Total = 33 Credits

P = can be taken prior to program acceptance

I = internet only classes

B = blended classes