



NORTHWEST FLORIDA
STATE COLLEGE

**Medical Assisting
Certificate Program**

**STUDENT
HANDBOOK**

2026 - 2027

NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

Medical Assisting Certificate Program

Student Handbook

2026 - 2027

Revision Statement/Disclaimer

Created 11.01.2025 | Updated 05.21.26

NWFSC reserves the right to amend, alter, change, delete, or modify any of the provisions of this Handbook at any time and in any manner deemed to best serve the interests of the students and the college. Students will be notified of any changes.

Notice of Equal Access/Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination

Northwest Florida State College is dedicated to the concepts of equity and equal opportunity. It is the specific intention of the College not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, genetic information, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, or age in programs or activities, in its employment practices, or in the admission and treatment of students in its programs or activities. If you have questions regarding compliance with the College's nondiscrimination policy or a complaint regarding harassment or discrimination, please contact the College's Equity Coordinator:

Roberta Mackey
Executive Director of Human Resources/Equity Coordinator
100 College Blvd. East, Building: 310, Niceville, FL 32578
Phone: (850) 729-5337 Email: mackeyr@nwfsc.edu

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §§ 1681, et seq.) and its implementing regulations ([34 C.F.R. part 106](#)) prohibit and are designed to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. The requirement not to discriminate in education programs or activities extends to admission and employment. Discrimination on the basis of sex includes, but is not limited to, sex-based harassment that is sufficiently serious to deny or limit an individual's ability to participate in or benefit from the program at issue. Examples of sex-based harassment include sexual harassment, sexual violence, and gender-based harassment. Northwest Florida State College complies with all aspects of Title IX and other federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination. If you have questions regarding compliance with Title IX or if you have a complaint regarding sexual harassment or sexual violence, please contact the College's Title IX Coordinator:

Amanda Diamond
HR Specialist | Employee Engagement Coordinator | Title IX Coordinator
100 College Blvd. East, Building 310, Niceville, FL 32578
Phone: (850) 729-5233 Email: diamond4@nwfsc.edu

To read the College's Title IX procedure, go to the College's Title IX website at www.nwfsc.edu/about/compliance.

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WELCOME LETTER

To the Incoming Medical Assisting Student,

Thank you for your interest in the Medical Assisting Certificate Program. We are so happy that you have chosen to pursue your education here at Northwest Florida State College. We take pride in the program that we have developed and are eager to assist you in becoming proficient in Medical Assisting as you kick start a new step in your career.

This program is designed to provide you with the skills and knowledge needed to become an entry-level Medical Assistant. However, education is a personal choice, and each of you is responsible for your own learning and success. We will provide you with everything you need to excel in this program, but you must do your part in completing the assignments and understanding the expectations. Please make sure that you understand the policies and guidelines outlined here and in the NWFSC Student Handbook that is available in the College Catalog. These policies encompass the academic and professional behaviors that are expected to be followed. You will sign a handbook acknowledgement statement verifying that you understand the contents of this handbook and agree to abide by the policies and guidelines within. Therefore, it is your responsibility to understand and adhere to them.

This program is designed to prepare you to take a national certification exam to become a certified Medical Assistant. Your completion of the program is not contingent on passing the national certification exam. Graduation does not guarantee passage of the national certification exam or employment as a Medical Assistant. However, we strive to help each student progress through the program so that they are prepared to take the exam and work as a Medical Assistant. We wish you success and hope that you thrive in the upcoming weeks.

Sincerely,

Northwest Florida State College

Medical Assisting Certificate Program Staff and Faculty

medassisting@nwfsc.edu

INTRODUCTION

About the Profession

Medical Assisting is a healthcare profession that involves providing both clinical and administrative support to physicians and other healthcare providers. Medical Assistants are trained to perform a variety of tasks such as recording patient histories, measuring vital signs, preparing patients for examinations, assisting with procedures, administering medications as directed, and performing basic laboratory tests. On the administrative side, they may schedule appointments, manage medical records, handle billing, and coordinate communication within the healthcare team. By combining clinical and office skills, Medical Assistants play a vital role in ensuring that healthcare facilities run smoothly while supporting quality patient care. They can be found working in physician offices, clinics, outpatient centers, and other healthcare settings.

Certification Information and Requirements

It is important to note that the state of Florida does not require licensure or certification to work as a Medical Assistant. Many Medical Assistants in Florida learn on the job. However, other states may have certification requirements.

There are many options for national certification exams. NWFSC's Medical Assisting certificate program prepares students to take the National Healthcareer Association's Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) exam. To qualify for this exam, students must complete an approved training program or have 1 year of work experience. Students must also be 18 years old and will be required to submit a copy of their high school transcripts or equivalent.

PROGRAM MISSION

The goal of the Medical Assisting program is to prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and practical experience necessary to provide high-quality patient care and administrative support in healthcare settings. By the end of the program, students will be proficient in clinical procedures such as taking vital signs, administering medications, assisting with examinations, and performing basic laboratory tests, as well as administrative tasks including scheduling, medical records management, and billing. The program also equips students with strong communication and professionalism skills to enhance patient interactions and support healthcare teams. Graduates will be prepared to successfully pass the NHA Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) exam and pursue entry-level positions as Medical Assistants in a variety of clinical environments.

PROGRAM LEVEL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will demonstrate effective interaction and communication skills when collaborating with patients, families, and members of the healthcare team in a therapeutic and professional manner.

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2. Students will comply with federal and state regulations including legal and ethical responsibilities, confidentiality and scope of practice as they apply to the field of Medical Assisting.
3. Students will demonstrate clinical and administrative skill competence in accordance with current industry standards and best practices.
4. Students will apply infection control practices and demonstrate understanding in the healthcare setting.

PROGRAM GOALS

1. Students will achieve at least a 75% pass rate on the NHA CCMA exam.
2. An average of 70% of students that start the program will successfully complete the program.
3. At least 70% of respondent graduates either find employment in the field and/or closely related field or continue their education within one year of graduation.

BASIC PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Sequence

The Medical Assisting Certification Program is structured as a three-semester program totaling 1,300 clock hours. Classes that make up the program are taken in the following sequence.

Semester	Course ID	Course Name	Clock Hours
General Education/Prerequisite Phase			
Semester 1	HCP 0001	Basic Healthcare Worker	90
	MEA 0002	Introduction to Medical Assisting	250
	MEA 0501	Medical Assisting Office Procedures	75
	MEA 0521	Phlebotomy for Medical Assisting	75
			490
Semester 2	MEA 0543	Electrocardiography for Medical Assisting	75
	MEA 0581	Clinical Medical Assisting	230
	MEA 0530	Pharmacology for Medical Assisting	90
	MEA 0573	Laboratory Procedures for Medical Assisting	125
			520
Semester 3	MEA 0506	Administrative Office Procedures for Medical Assisting	90
	MEA 0942	Practicum Experience for Medical Assisting	200
			290
Total			1300

Program Format

The Medical Assisting Certification Program is delivered in a hybrid format, combining online instruction with in-person laboratory and clinical experiences. All courses include an in-person lab component, with the exception of *HCP 0001 – Basic Healthcare Worker*, which is conducted fully online aside from one required day of hands-on Basic Life Support (BLS) training.

MEA0942 – Practicum Experience for Medical Assisting includes a clinical rotation requirement. During the designated eight-week rotation period, students will not attend classes but will instead be placed at an assigned clinical site, where they are required to complete three 8-hour shifts per week. Additional details regarding clinical rotation are outlined in the section below.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

The Medical Assisting Program reserves the right to deny admission or require withdrawal of any student who, in the judgment of the Program faculty, gives evidence of being unable to perform the responsibilities and tasks required of the Medical Assisting profession. Essential functions (or technical performance standards) represent the essential non-academic requirements of the Medical Assisting Certificate (CCP) Program that students must master successfully participate in the program.

Neither the College nor the Medical Assisting Program discriminates on the basis of disability in admission or access to its programs, services, or activities for qualified individuals who meet essential functions requirements. The College will provide reasonable accommodation for documented disabilities of individuals who are otherwise eligible to receive or participate in college programs, services, or activities. For a student who cannot perform essential functions, whether they are a student who needs reasonable accommodations or a student who does not, the Medical Assisting Program reserves the right to deny admission or require withdrawal of any student who, in the judgment of the Program Director, presents evidence of being unable to perform the responsibilities and tasks required of the Medical Assisting profession as described by the essential functions in this section.

Requirements include:

A Sound Intellect:

COGNITIVE AND INTELLECTUAL STANDARDS

- **THINK CRITICALLY:** To identify and solve problems; identify cause/effect relationships; to apply reading, lecture, and laboratory information to case study preparation; to employ effective teaching, learning and test taking strategies.
- **COMPREHEND:** Relevant information regarding patient diagnoses, indications and contraindications, human pathology and impairments from textbooks, medical records, and professional literature.
- **PRIORITIZE:** Events to provide for safety, multiple tasks, integrate information and make decisions about sequence and progression.

- **MAKE CLINICAL DECISIONS:** To respond quickly and appropriately to patient status changes; act safely and ethically in the lab, hospital, clinic, or physician office.
- **SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM MEMORY:** To accurately and quickly remember data from the chart and information relayed in verbal exchanges with the healthcare staff; to access learned knowledge to include but not limited to diagnoses, safety precautions, emergency procedures; to participate successfully in the learning and evaluation of knowledge within the Medical Assisting curriculum.
- **THINK QUICKLY AND CLEARLY:** To execute all duties unimpaired by any condition or substance that alters mental processing, speed or quality of thought processes or judgment.

Manual Dexterity, Motor Skills, Visuals, And Sensory Acuity: PHYSICAL STANDARDS

- **PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH:** Possess the physical, mental, and emotional health to maintain alertness and concentration during an 8-hour day under the stressful conditions of time constraints and a distracting environment; move freely and safely around the hospital, clinic, or physician office.
- **HEARING:** Possess normal, or correctable hearing.
- **PHYSICAL:** Possess the ability to: bend, stoop, stand, lift and move objects of at least 20 pounds, grasp with one or both hands, reach shelves, patients lying in bed or seated in a chair, perform moderately taxing repetitive tasks, often requiring prolonged sitting and/or standing over several hours.
- **MANUAL DEXTERITY:** Possess sufficient hand-eye motor coordination to allow delicate manipulations of fine instruments and tools, grasp and release small objects (needles and syringes), utilize a computer keyboard and mouse to operate.
- **VISION:** Characterize the color, clarity, and viscosity of biological specimens and medical tools. Discriminate color, shading, and fine structural differences of medical tools, read text and numbers, judge distance and depth accurately.

Effective Communication Skills: COMMUNICATION STANDARDS

- **SPEAK AND EXPRESS:** Clearly and understandably in the English language; information to peers, faculty, patients, their families and other health care providers; to explain conditions and procedures.
- **READ:** Typed, handwritten, chart data and computer-generated documents in the English language; at a level of competency that allows safe and timely execution of essential tasks or assignments.

- **UNDERSTAND/INTERPRET:** Medical terminology and information given; to follow simple and complex instructions (oral or written) regarding patient care and testing; and respond to non-verbal communication/behaviors of self and others.
- **FOLLOW DIRECTIONS:** Accurately and efficiently, seeking clarification where necessary.
- **WRITE:** To produce legible handwritten or computer word processed documents; use correct medical terminology, spelling, grammar, and punctuation; organize and express thoughts in written form in the English language; to prepare accurate, thorough, legally defensible patient documentation.
- **INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:** To work collaboratively; interact professionally; to establish rapport with patients, colleagues, and classmates; to resolve conflicts; with individuals from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds; maintain confidentiality in all interactions.

Professional Skills:

BEHAVIORAL/PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The ability to work independently, to manage time efficiently, to comprehend, analyze, and synthesize various materials, as well as hold sound psychological health and stability.

- **FLEXIBILITY:** To adjust to a constantly changing and demanding full-time schedule.
- **COOPERATION:** To work as a member of a team; develop positive and effective relationships with faculty, clinicians, peers, and patients.
- **RECOGNIZE LIMITATIONS:** To request assistance when needed; accept correction and constructive suggestions; assume responsibility for personal development; utilize resources effectively.
- **WILLINGNESS:** To wear required professionally required attire; to participate in lab activities that require bodily fluids, chemicals, and other types of sample collection.
- **POSITIVE ATTITUDE:** To demonstrate initiative, enthusiasm and appropriate peer and patient interactions.
- **WORK ETHIC:** To attend class and clinic promptly and regularly; to stay focused and on task in lecture and laboratory instructional time; to submit work products promptly when due; to submit to all classroom and clinical rules/policies; to comply with all legal and ethical standards of practice.
- **STRESS MANAGEMENT:** Coping skills for fast-paced clinical situations; managing multiple academic deadlines; respond appropriately in a stressful environment; managing personal matters outside of class/workday.
- **PLANNING AHEAD:** To arrange transportation and living accommodations for/during off campus clinical assignments to foster timely reporting to the classroom and clinical center.

- **SELF CARE:** To maintain general good health and hygiene in order not to jeopardize the health and safety of self and individuals with whom one interacts in the academic and clinical settings.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The online classroom is available in Canvas. Visit [here](#) for more information on how to get started with NWFSC Online.

All non-lab assignments will be submitted on Canvas and may be run through the Turnitin plagiarism checking software. Assignments will be submitted via faculty instructions.

CLINICAL ROTATION REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to meet specific health and security standards prior to rotating through designated clinical sites affiliated with Northwest Florida State College's Medical Assisting Program. Students are financially responsible for all drug tests, background checks, employment verification, vaccination documentation, etc. Students will be required to complete and submit all the requirements outlined below prior to starting the Medical Assisting Program. Students will upload proof of the required information in a third-party document tracking program.

Drug Screen

Students are required to submit to a drug screen before beginning the program. Students will receive an email with instructions on how to complete the drug screen upon applying to the program. Students may be asked by the Program Director, Northwest Florida State College, or the affiliating clinical agency to submit to individual, group, and/or random drug screening at any time. The College reserves the right to determine the agency to conduct drug screening. Dilute negative results require rescreening. Refusal to comply with requested screening within the timeframe directed (usually 12-24 hours) will result in dismissal from the program.

Background Check

A background check is required by clinical facilities for all Medical Assisting students. The clinical facility sets the standards for acceptance of a student, and results of a background check may result in a clinical facility declining to accept the student. For example, a felony may prevent clinical sites from accepting a student.

For continued progression in the Medical Assisting Program, a student must not have been or be found guilty, regardless of adjudication, of any offense that would disqualify students for employment as Medical Assistants. After acceptance into the program, students are responsible for notifying the Program Director of any arrest, regardless of adjudication. Failure to promptly notify the Program Director shall be independent of grounds for dismissal from the program. Students will be checked for the following:

- SSN verification
- Criminal search (7 years or up to 5 criminal searches)
- Violent Sex Offender and Predator Registry Search

- Healthcare Fraud and Abuse
 - HHS/OIG List of Excluded Individuals
 - GSA List of Parties Excluded from Federal Programs
 - U.S. Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), List of Specially Designated Nationals (SDN)
- Applicable State Exclusion List
- License or certification

CPR

Students are required to have CPR-BLS certification through the American Red Cross (ARC) or the American Heart Association (AHA) BLS for Healthcare Providers prior to clinical experiences. This certification is embedded in the HCP 0001- Basic Healthcare Worker course. If students already possess their BLS certification through these two certifying bodies, they will not be required to retake the certification, only provide a copy of their active certification. Student certification must be valid throughout the duration of the Medical Assisting Program.

Immunizations and Documentation Tracking

While Northwest Florida State College holds no stance on immunization statuses, clinical affiliates establish their own standards of what students are required to provide proof of prior to attending a clinical rotation at that site. Failure to meet and maintain immunization requirements could lead to dismissal or ineligibility for certain third-party clinical sites.

The table below outlines the required immunization documents. Variations from the outlined requirements and definitions of each will not be accepted.

Requirement	Comments
Varicella	Immunity verified by proof of varicella immunization or titer. History of chicken pox is not acceptable.
MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella)	Proof of two doses or current titer; (It is usually less expensive to have the MMR repeated than to pay for a Rubella screen or titer.)
Hepatitis B	This vaccine is a series of three doses, with the second and third doses given 1 and 6 months respectively after the first dose. A declination form is available to students in COMPLIO.
Tdap	One dose of Tdap is required even if you had DTaP as a child. Another vaccine, called Td, protects against tetanus and diphtheria, but not pertussis. A Td booster is required every 10 years. Tdap may be given as one of these boosters if you have never gotten Tdap before.
Covid-19	Currently many clinical sites are requiring students to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19. The definition of "fully vaccinated" means obtaining the two-dose vaccination from Pfizer or Moderna, or the one-dose vaccination from Johnson and Johnson. A declination form is available for students in COMPLIO, but please be aware that the clinical site may refuse students dependent upon their vaccination status and the College has no authority over those decisions. The College does not require students to receive the Covid-19 vaccinations to be a student, but the College has no authority over third-party facilities who set their immunization requirements without college oversight. A declination form is available to students in COMPLIO.
Tuberculosis Screen (PPD or QuantiFERON-TB Gold blood test)	The PPD skin test or the QuantiFERON-TB Gold blood test must be performed within 12 months of the start of student clinical rotations. A positive result requires a chest x-ray and report of physician recommendations. If you have received the BCG vaccine, you must perform the blood test and cannot receive the PPD skin test.
Influenza	Currently many sites are requiring students to receive Influenza immunization if participating in clinical rotation from October 1st through April 30th. A declination form is available to students from the clinical site, which indicates clinical site requirements.

Clinical Schedule

At the conclusion of the program, students are required to complete 200 hours (twenty-four (24) eight-hour shifts) at an assigned clinical site. Clinical schedules and placements will be determined by the Program Director based on clinical site availability. Clinical site decisions are independent, and the Program Director or the College cannot influence their acceptance process. Clinical sites reserve the right to accept or decline a student at their discretion. Any student missing clinical hours during the Practicum must make up the time according to the clinical site's availability.

Statement about Clinical Availability

Clinical site availability may be limited. In cases where the number of eligible students exceeds available clinical placements, a waiting list will be established. Placement on the waiting list will be determined by GPA and attendance records in Medical Assisting courses. Students placed on the waiting list will be scheduled for clinical rotations as space becomes available. Questions regarding this policy must be directed to the Program Director.

COMPLIO

COMPLIO is a website that provides tracking services to students. All the documentation outlined above must be uploaded into COMPLIO. COMPLIO also provides a place to order the background check and urine drug screen, customized to the Medical Assisting program requirements. Together, the background check, drug screen, and document tracking cost is \$155 and is the financial responsibility of the student.

Service Work Policy

During scheduled clinical rotation hours, **students are not to be used as part of the clinical facility's work force and may not be paid.** Students must be supervised and may not be used to substitute for regular employees as part of their clinical Practicum experience. Service work by students in a clinical setting outside of academic hours is not a requirement. If the student works for the institution outside of academic hours, it will not be counted towards the students' clinical Practicum hours. Hours worked outside of the practicum experience should not interfere with the student's progression in the Medical Assisting Program. Examples of service work include but are not limited to working as a Medical Assistants, laboratory assistant, or continuing to work evening shifts or weekends at a clinical affiliate during the student's progression through the Medical Assisting Program.

ATTENDANCE AND PROFESSIONAL POLICIES

Attendance

Active participation in laboratory sessions is a required component of this program, as these activities are essential for the development of the practical skills necessary for Medical Assisting. Students who are absent from two or more laboratory sessions in any clinical training course are subject to receiving a grade of Incomplete ("I") or Failure ("F") at the discretion of the Program Director.

The National Healthcareer Association (NHA) establishes specific eligibility requirements for certification examinations. To ensure compliance, students are required to maintain consistent attendance. Absences from clinical rotations are strictly prohibited. Failure to complete all scheduled clinical rotation hours may result in dismissal from the program. Any time missed during the Practicum must be made up and scheduled at the discretion of the clinical site

Religious Observance by Students

The College shall accommodate recognized religious observances of students under existing state directives. For students whose religious observances interact with the following activities, the Program will take all reasonable steps to make provisions for the student to complete the activity: admission and registration, attendance in class, class activities, examinations, and official ceremonies, and class work assignments. Students wishing to participate in any recognized religious holiday observances must notify the instructor, **in advance**, of their absence. Students will be excused for such absences without penalty. Students are responsible for any material covered during their excused absence. A reasonable amount of time will be allowed to complete make-up assignments. Students who believe they have been denied an education benefit because of their religious belief or practice may seek redress as outlined in the Student Grievance Procedures.

Tardiness

Chronic tardiness is prohibited. Any instance of tardiness without prior approval will result in deductions from the student's weekly laboratory and professional grade. Repeated or excessive tardiness may also result in the student being denied participation in laboratory activities for that lab day.

Dress Code for Laboratory Classes

Medical Assisting laboratory activities involve exposure to blood and other bodily fluids; therefore, a dress code is required to minimize biohazard risks and ensure student safety. To participate in laboratory sessions, students must wear scrubs of any color or style that include full-length pants and shirts (crop tops are not permitted). Shoes must be closed toed with secured backs, and hair must be pulled back away from the face. Failure to comply with the dress code may result in the student being excluded from laboratory participation for that day. During clinical rotation, students are required to adhere to the dress code and professional standards established by the clinical affiliate.

Food and Beverage

The consumption of food or beverages in the laboratory is strictly prohibited due to biohazardous risks to students.

Substance Abuse Policy

Substance Use and/or Abuse

NWFSC Drug-Free Workplace [Policy #HR 4.00](#) states that Northwest Florida State College is alcohol and drug-free in accordance with Public Law 100-690, The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of alcohol or a controlled

substance is prohibited in and on NWFSC owned and controlled property except for events specifically approved to include alcohol. Students in violation will be subject to disciplinary action as stated in the Student Code of Conduct published in the Student Handbook/College Catalog and may be subject to criminal prosecution.

Tobacco Use

Per NWFSC Smoking and Tobacco [Policy #HR 21.00](#) states:

Smoking and the use of all tobacco products (including E-cigarettes, vaping, and smokeless tobacco) shall be prohibited from use at all Northwest Florida State College facilities, properties, and vehicles, owned or leased, regardless of location.

This policy shall apply to all students, faculty, staff, and other persons on college property, regardless of the purpose of their visit. Further, no tobacco-related advertising or sponsorship shall be permitted on NWFSC property, at NWFSC-sponsored events, or in publications produced by NWFSC, apart from advertising in a newspaper or magazine that is not produced by NWFSC, and which is sold, brought, or distributed on NWFSC property.

Program Policy

Due to the impact on psychomotor performance, students are expected to be drug-free to be admitted to the Medical Assisting Program and throughout the duration of the program.

- Students may be asked by the Program Director, an authorized Northwest Florida State College employee, or an affiliating clinical agency to which you are seeking to be assigned to submit to individual, group, and/or random drug screening at any time. The College reserves the right to determine the agency to conduct drug screening.
- Students will be asked to submit to drug screening as a component of the admission or readmission procedure, and as required for clinical rotations at various health care facilities or community agencies. Dilute negative results require rescreening.
- Students are responsible for drug screening costs for individual screening required for initial admission, dilute negative results, random screenings, or for readmission.
- Refusal to comply with requested screening within the time frame directed (usually 12-24 hours) will result in dismissal from the Program.

Students assigned to affiliating agencies that require compliance with drug testing policies—including, but not limited to, testing based on reasonable suspicion of impairment or use of illegal drugs and/or alcohol—may be subject to drug testing in accordance with the agency's policies. Prior to program admission, students must sign a consent form permitting the affiliating agency to release any drug testing results to the College. Students tested by an affiliating agency are required to provide the Program Director with a copy of all test results. Failure to submit results promptly may result in dismissal from the program. A positive drug or alcohol test result will constitute grounds for immediate dismissal from the program.

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Effective communication is essential for success at the Practicum site and for future professional careers. The student's primary point of contact for the College is the Health Sciences Certificate Program Director. Email is the College's official method of communication, and inquiries will be responded to within 48 hours during the workweek. While the instructor may occasionally respond to emails on weekends, emails sent after 4:30 PM on Thursday may not receive a response until Monday morning. After placement, if students need to contact the clinical site, they must obtain the appropriate contact information from the site and communicate directly.

TRANSPORTATION

The clinical rotation requires a significant in-person time commitment. Students are responsible for commuting to assigned clinical sites, which may involve travel across multiple counties in the region and must have reliable transportation. Clinical rotations typically require attendance three days per week. While hours may vary depending on clinical site availability, students should be prepared to participate during normal business hours. However, depending on site placement, students may be required to attend clinical rotations outside of standard business hours to align with the operational schedule of the assigned site.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Academic Integrity

Medical Assisting Certificate Program students must follow the College's Academic Integrity Policy, which is found [here](#).

The Medical Assisting Program follows the standards set forth by the College. Please use the link above to review the following: Academic Offenses, Non-Academic Offenses, Disciplinary Procedures, Disciplinary Sanctions, and Due Process. Information for filing a grievance is listed below.

Statement on scholastic dishonesty: A student attending NWFSC assumes responsibility for conduct compatible with the mission of the college as an educational institution. Students have the responsibility to submit coursework that is the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. Students must follow all instructions given by faculty or designated college representatives when taking examinations, placement assessments, tests, quizzes, and evaluations. Actions constituting scholastic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, collusion, and falsifying documents.

Penalties for scholastic dishonesty will depend upon the nature of the violation and may range from lowering a grade on one assignment, to an "F" in the course, dismissal, or expulsion from the program, and up to and including dismissal or expulsion from the College. See the College Student Handbook for more detailed information.

Each student must sign the Academic Integrity Pledge in Appendix B.

Grading Policy

The general grading policy is outlined in the current Northwest Florida State College Catalog [here](#). All general education courses, or courses not designated as technical in nature, will be graded on the grade scale consistent with the College.

Grading Scale for Northwest Florida State College	
Letter Grade	Percentage
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	Below 60
I	Incomplete

Academic Requirements

Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale and earn a minimum grade of 70% ("C") or higher in all courses to be eligible for completion of the Medical Assisting Certificate Program and to sit for any NHA Certification Exam offered during each term. Students who fail any course must reapply to the program and retake the failed course when it is next offered within the program. Reapplication to the Medical Assisting Certificate Program does not guarantee readmission. *

***Graduation is not contingent based upon the passing of any type of external certificate exam.**

Withdrawal

Withdrawing from the program is a voluntary action taken by the student. Students are encouraged to consult with the Program Director when considering withdrawing from the program. If a student withdraws, there may not be a chance of readmission. To be considered for readmission, students must withdraw in writing to the Program Director and include a reason for the withdrawal. The student must also complete withdrawal of paperwork through Student Services.

Dismissal

Students may be dismissed from the Medical Assisting Certificate Program for the following reasons without limitation on any other reason stated in the College Catalog, this handbook, or College or Program policy or procedure:

- Inability to progress
 - If a student does not receive a “C” or higher or maintain a cumulative 2.0 GPA
- Academic dishonesty violated Northwest Florida State College Academic and/or the Medical Assisting Program academic integrity policy
- Attendance policy noncompliance
- Occurrence of a critical incident, such as a serious breach of ethics, safety violation or endangering the health or welfare of a patient, or any other behavior that jeopardizes the reputation of the Medical Assisting Program and/or the College

EXPOSURE/ACCIDENT POLICY

The Northwest Florida State College Medical Assisting Program students must comply with OSHA standards for hazardous material control, infection control, and exposure to harmful substances, including, but not limited to, blood or other body fluids. **Students are responsible for their own healthcare.** Should they contract a communicable disease or be exposed to the same via body fluids or other means, they must report such exposure or condition to the Medical Assisting Program Director, clinical instructor, or preceptor immediately. Should immediate assessment and treatment be deemed necessary (including emergency care), students must comply with all agency and college policies regarding the occurrence, which include payment for any treatment or other required exposure procedures. Further, students must complete all documents regarding the occurrence via agency/site incident as well as appropriate college incident reporting.

[Click here for NWFSC Incident/Injury report form](#)

NWFSC carries Student Accident Coverage, which works with a student’s primary insurance carrier or independently if they do not have insurance. This student accident program provides coverage for college students who are injured while participating in covered college classes, labs, and/or training. Coverage provided under the course or program of study terminates upon the completion of the course or program. Please note that the policy only provides coverage for an injury to the student. An injury must be a direct result of the accident which occurred during the covered activity and not from sickness or disease.

Reporting:

1. Students should report to their instructor/Program Director any complaint of injury as a direct result of an accident which occurred during a lab. Instructors will file the Incident/Injury Report using the Maxient Reporting system (see the link provided above). The link to the form can be found above or in RaiderNet under the FORMS tab.

2. Students **MUST** check their college email or contact the college Risk Management Coordinator directly within 30 calendar days of the incident/injury to file an insurance claim. Students have 20 calendar days from the date of the injury/accident to file an insurance claim with the college by directly contacting the Risk Management Coordinator.
3. Failure to comply with this deadline may result in denial of claim.
4. Students should never give bills or invoices to instructors, the Program Director, or staff assistant. All documentation must be submitted directly to the college Risk Management Coordinator.

If a student seeks medical attention, they must provide a written medical clearance to the Program Director prior to returning to the clinical experience.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND HIPAA

The use of social networking by students and healthcare professionals should be done with careful consideration. To avoid any potential biases, students are **STRONGLY** discouraged from initiating or accepting friend requests from anyone associated with the clinical experience or Medical Assisting Program faculty while enrolled in the Medical Assisting Program. This includes but is not limited to clinical instructors, professional staff, patients, and/or family members of patients or staff. This allows students to be evaluated solely on clinical performance and not on personal information from social networking sites.

As both a professional, ethical, and legal requirement, students are expected to maintain patient confidentiality. Due to the public nature of social networking sites, privacy and professionalism may potentially be compromised. **All students are bound by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). * Students may not post anything that compromises patient or peer confidentiality.** This includes, but is not limited to, names, references to the clinical site or clinical staff, classmates, instructors, pictures of any part of the patient's body, and any information that may identify the patient or peer. No photographs should be taken or posted of any patients, staff, or facility. Students should refrain from posting any comments about their clinical experience, site, clinical instructor, patients, instructors, classmates, or any other staff member on their personal social networking profile, via text messaging, Twitter feed, or any other electronic networking medium. Failure to comply with the policy stated above may result in immediate dismissal from the program.

*For a review of HIPAA rules and polices, students can access their MediaLab "HIPAA Privacy and Security Rules" training module or go to www.hhs.gov/hipaa/index.html.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Students who believe they have suffered an injustice through the action of another student or instructor, may seek assistance using the procedures cited in the Student Handbook section of the [College Catalog](#).

Student grievances fall into two categories: academic and all others. While the grievance process is similar for both, different college offices are responsible for each category. NWFSC prohibits any form of retaliation against any student filing a grievance, academic or non-academic.

TEACH OUT PLAN

First, in the event of program closure, the circumstances will be communicated to all students immediately.

Actively Enrolled Medical Assisting Students:

- Students will be allowed to complete the Medical Assisting courses.
- Students in clinical rotations will be allowed to complete their clinical hours.

In the event of a natural disaster, in which the NWFSC Medical Assisting Program would have to close for an indeterminate amount of time, the college will inform the students of a plan for continuation as soon as the information is available. Students impacted at clinical sites will be moved to alternative sites based on availability. Classes will resume as soon as possible.

APPENDIX A

Medical Assisting Program Essential Functions Acknowledgement

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read the outlined Essential Functions required to succeed in Northwest Florida State College’s Medical Assisting Program. By signing this document, I acknowledge that I possess the functions that are summarized below and expanded in the Medical Assisting Student Handbook. By signing this form, I affirm that I meet the above requirements and can fulfill the responsibilities inherent to the role of a Medical Assisting student and future professional.

1. A sound intellect.
2. Manual dexterity, motor skills, visual and sensory acuity.
3. Effective communication skills
4. Professional skills such as the ability to work independently, to manage time efficiently, to comprehend, analyze, and synthesize various materials, as well as to hold sound psychological health and stability.

Name (Print)

Date

Signature

APPENDIX B

Medical Assisting Program Academic Integrity Pledge

Each student must sign the following academic integrity pledge before beginning the Medical Assisting Program.

I pledge to follow all rules for exams and assignments as specified by the student handbook, course instructor, and course syllabus and to follow the Medical Assisting Program honor code, which includes, but is not limited to the following:

- I will not cheat on exams, quizzes, projects, or any other assignments.
- I will not plagiarize. My work will be my own.
- I will not share test questions or answers.
- I will follow the policies, principles, rules, and guidelines of the College with respect to academic integrity.
- I will not post program materials anywhere on the internet. I understand that program materials, including assignments, quizzes, exams, PowerPoints, and study guides are the property of the NWFSC Medical Assisting Program, and that posting these materials, with or without answers, constitutes cheating.

I understand that any academic integrity violation may result in immediate dismissal from the Medical Assisting Program and/or the College.

Name (Print)

Date

Signature

APPENDIX C

Medical Assisting Program Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read the Northwest Florida State College Medical Assisting Student handbook front-to- back. I agree with the terms that were outlined in the handbook. I understand the consequences that will follow if I stray from the agreed terms of the handbook. If I have any questions or concerns regarding procedures, I will refer to the handbook for policies before reaching out to the Medical Assisting Program Director.

Name (Print)

Date

Signature