

## **MEDICAL BOARD STAFF REPORT**

DATE REPORT ISSUED: March 27, 2018  
ATTENTION: Members, Medical Board of California  
SUBJECT: Recognition of Medical Assistant Certifying Organization:  
American Medical Certification Association  
STAFF CONTACT: April Alameda, Chief, Licensing Program

### **REQUESTED ACTION:**

Determine if the American Medical Certification Association (AMCA), a medical assistant certification organization, satisfies the minimum requirements of the regulations and should be granted recognition pursuant to 16 California Code of Regulations (CCR) section 1366.31 (Attachment 1).

### **BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS:**

The AMCA was established in 2010 and is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization. On October 8, 2015, AMCA was granted accreditation by the Institute for Credentialing Excellence to offer medical assistant certifying examinations to candidates to prove they are knowledgeable in the following subject areas: medical terminology, medical law and ethics, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and infection control, anatomy and physiology, phlebotomy, electrocardiogram, and mental health.

The AMCA, located in Fairfield, New Jersey, applied to the Medical Board of California (Board) requesting approval to become an approved medical assistant certifying organization. Board staff conducted the initial review of the documentation (Attachment 2) submitted by AMCA and determined that it met the requirements stated in 16 CCR section 1366.31 in order to become an approved medical assistant certifying organization. The documentation reviewed includes:

- Verification that the organization is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization as required by 16 CCR section 1366.31(b)(1).
- Verification that the organization provides a psychometrically valid examination that is occupationally relevant and tests for skills and procedures outlined in 16 CCR section 1366.
- Verification that the organization meets the requirements of 16 CCR section 1366.31(b)(3), which sets forth the minimum education or experience requirements for medical assistants seeking certification.
- Verification that the organization requires the candidates that receive certification to obtain a minimum of 60 hours of continuing education related to the practice of a medical assistant over a five-year period as required in 16 CCR section 1366.31(b)(4).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Board staff concluded that the AMCA meets California regulatory requirements and recommends that the Board grant recognition to AMCA.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. California Code of Regulations section 1366.31
2. AMCA Cover Letter dated November 1, 2017, and Candidate Handbook

**California Code of Regulations**  
**Title 16. Professional and Vocational Regulations**

**§ 1366.31. Approved Certifying Organizations**

(a) An organization that certifies medical assistants may apply to the division for approval. This application shall include the following information:

- (1) Name and address of the applicant;
- (2) Applicant's federal employee identification number (FEIN) or social security number;
- (3) Name, address and telephone number of a contact person for the applicant;
- (4) Name, address and telephone number of the accrediting organization that accredited the applicant;
- (5) Name, address and telephone number of the organization that validated the applicant's certifying examination;
- (6) Information sufficient to establish that the certifying organization meets the standards set forth in subsection (b).

(b) For purposes of Section 1366.3(c)(1), an organization that certifies medical assistants shall be approved if it meets all of the following standards:

- (1) Is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization;
- (2) Requires all applicants for certification to successfully complete a psychometrically valid examination that is secure, is occupationally relevant and tests for the skills and procedures outlined in Section 1366;
- (3) Has a requirement for certification of a medical assistant in one or more of the following:
  - (A) Graduation from a medical assistant training program accredited by an accreditation agency recognized by the United States Department of Education;
  - (B) Graduation from a medical assistant training program in a postsecondary institution accredited by an accreditation agency recognized by the United States Department of Education or an institution approved by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education;
  - (C) A minimum of 2 years experience as a practicing medical assistant within 5 years immediately preceding the date of examination;
  - (D) Military training or schooling equivalent to that described in subsections (A) or (B) above;
  - (E) Employment at the time of certification as an instructor in an accredited medical assistant program or institution;
- (4) Requires its certificate holders to obtain a minimum of 60 hours of continuing education related to the practice of medical assistants over a 5 year period.

(c) The American Association of Medical Assistants and the American Medical Technologists, which were previously referenced in Section 1366.3(a), shall be deemed approved as medical assistant certifying organizations. This approval shall terminate on January 1, 2000 unless prior to that time the above certifying organizations have applied for and been approved by the division. This paragraph shall be automatically repealed on January 1, 2000.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 2018 and 2071, Business and Professions Code. Reference: Sections 2069, 2070 and 2071, Business and Professions Code.



310 Passaic Ave., Suite 204B  
Fairfield, NJ 07004  
888.960.AMCA(2622)  
f. 973.582.1801  
[www.AMCAexams.com](http://www.AMCAexams.com)

Date: November 1, 2017

Medical Board of California  
Ms. AnnaMarie Sewell, Associate Analyst  
2005 Evergreen Street  
Suite 1200  
Sacramento, CA 95815

**RE: AMCA Request for Board Approved Medical Assistant Certifying Organization.**

Ms. Sewell,

Please find enclosed the requested documentation for AMCAexams to be considered as an Approved Medical Assistant Certifying Organization. If there is anything further needed as part of the approval process, please contact me. Thank you and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

**Cynthia M. Orr, MA, Ed. Admin**  
**American Medical Certification Association**  
**Vice President of Compliance & Accreditation**  
1.888.960.AMCA(2622) x 111  
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310 Passaic Ave Suite 204B  
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16 CCR § 1366.31

**§ 1366.31. Approved Certifying Organizations.**

(a) An organization that certifies medical assistants may apply to the division for approval. This application shall include the following information:

**(1) Name and address of the applicant;**

American Medical Certification Association (AMCA –www. AMCAexams.com)  
310 Passaic Ave Suite 204 B  
Fairfield, NJ 07004

**(2) Applicant's federal employee identification number (FEIN) or social security number;**

Our FEIN number is 47-1895448.

**(3) Name, address and telephone number of a contact person for the applicant;**

AMCAexams  
Cynthia M. Orr  
310 Passaic Ave  
Suite 204B  
Fairfield, NJ 07004  
888-960-2622 x111

**(4) Name, address and telephone number of the accrediting organization that accredited the applicant;**

Institute for Credentialing Excellence  
2025 M Street NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20036

**(5) Name, address and telephone number of the organization that validated the applicant's certifying examination;**

Institute for Credentialing Excellence  
2025 M Street NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20036

**(6) Information sufficient to establish that the certifying organization meets the standards set forth in subsection (b).**

**(b) For purposes of Section 1366.3(c)(1), an organization that certifies medical assistants shall be approved if it meets all of the following standards:**

**(1) Is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization;**

AMCA Exams is established as a NJ Non-Profit Corporation and the paper work is attached – **(Exhibit A)**

**(2) Requires all applicants for certification to successfully complete a psychometrically valid examination that is secure is occupationally relevant and tests for the skills and procedures outlined in Section 1366;**

The AMCA Clinical Medical Assistant exam was accredited in 2015 and evidence of that accreditation is attached – **(Exhibit B)**. In addition, the CMAC exam is only given under the direction of a Proctor. The

- <https://www.amcaexams.com/stay-certified/using-amca-ce-materials/>
- <https://www.amcaexams.com/stay-certified/using-outside-ce-materials/>



## **AMCA Candidate Handbook**

### **Clinical Medical Assistant Certification**

#### **AMCA Headquarters**

310 Passaic Ave Suite 204B, Fairfield, NJ 07004

**Phone: 888.960.AMCA(2622)**

**Fax: (973) 582.1801**

**[www.AMCAexams.com](http://www.AMCAexams.com)**

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**This candidate handbook provides information about:**

- AMCA allied health certification examinations and registration fees for the Clinical Medical Assistant Certification exam.
- Eligibility requirements for the Clinical Medical Assistant Certification exam.
- Applying and sitting for AMCA Clinical Medical Assistant certification exam.
- What to expect after sitting for the Clinical Medical Assistant Certification examination.

**Statement of Purpose**

American Medical Certification Association is headquartered in Fairfield, New Jersey. The American Medical Certification Association (AMCA) was established with the vision of enhancing the allied healthcare industry by providing national certification exams that validate the knowledge and expertise of professionals in this field. In support of these goals, AMCA developed the Clinical Medical Assistant certification, which has been administered to over 2,000 candidates to date. Clinical Medical Assistants are medical professionals who perform administrative and clinical tasks to assist physicians in providing patient care. The CMAC examination provides the public and employers with assurance that a CMAC has the knowledge to perform those tasks, including drawing blood, taking vitals, charting patient history, and respecting patient confidentiality. Additionally, the AMCA collaborates and actively participates in the allied healthcare industry to serve as a support network for allied healthcare professionals. The AMCA has obtained membership in various organizations to strengthen its' ties to the industry.

AMCA creates and distributes certification exams to the allied healthcare industry through schools and organizations; the candidates that are being trained as Clinical Medical Assistants are our specific target audience. The purpose of the Clinical Medical Assistant certification exam is to verify that each successful exam candidate has proven that they are knowledgeable in law and ethics, infection control, patient care, and phlebotomy/ekg skills required of a clinical medical assistant.

If a candidate is successful, they are issued the CMAC mark. Certification by definition means, "to attest as being true or as represented as meeting a standard." It is through a set of standards that the American Medical Certification Association has developed each of its exams. In addition, the Clinical Medical Assistant certification also demonstrates an individual's skill and expertise in its subject matter and its advancement in its profession.

## **Certification**

Certification is a voluntary process designed to establish that a person has met professional standards of education, training, and experience. A certification attests to the fact that the person has met the standards of a credentialing organization and is entitled to make the public aware of his or her professional competence.



## **AMCA's Vision**

The vision at the AMCA is to be a primary resource for allied health organizations by staying abreast of industry changes and federal mandates.

The AMCA will strive to develop and enhance the allied healthcare industry by providing national certification exams through the validation of individual skills and professional standards.

## **AMCA's Mission**

The AMCA's mission is to improve the quality of patient care while helping individuals become marketable in today's ever changing workforce.

The AMCA is committed to working together with schools and organizations to develop quality allied healthcare professionals.

## **AMCA's Core Values**

**Dependability** – Customer service is our priority. We believe that by providing customer service that is dependable and reliable, our clients can be assured that the AMCA is here to support them.

**Advancement** – We are advocates for the allied health industry. By supporting CE opportunities, the AMCA is helping provide a well-rounded employee capable of providing quality patient care.

**Honesty** – Upholding our high ethical standards and incorporating them into our everyday practices shows our commitment to providing quality candidates to the allied health industry.

**Respect** - The AMCA agrees to respect state and federal laws and stay abreast of industry changes and report on those changes as deemed necessary. They also agree to respect the rights of clients as well as all members of society, colleagues, and other medical, health, certified professionals and shall safeguard confidences and privacy within the constraints of the law.

## **AMCA Certification Board**

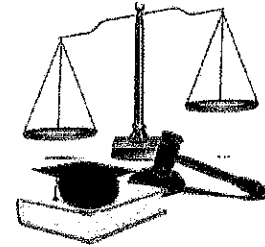
The AMCA Certification Board was established in 2013 to be an autonomous board of the AMCA, LLC in order to comply with national accreditation standards for demonstrating independence from the AMCA, LLC. At current, the Board has authority for the Clinical Medical Assistant exam, the Phlebotomy Technician exam, the Billing and Coding Specialist exam, the Medical Administrative Assistant exam and the ETC exam. In the future, the Board will potentially be responsible for other certification exams. The AMCA Certification Board is comprised of nine (9) elected voting members plus the Executive Director who is nonvoting. Each member represents a stakeholder group; the groups represented are the public, AMCA certified phlebotomists, certified clinical medical assistants, certified EKG technicians, certified billing and coding specialists, certified medical administrative assistants, the AMCA, the healthcare industry and education and training.

The purpose of the Board is to ensure that the AMCA Clinical Medical Assistant Certification exam is current and that it is a reliable credential. The

Certification Board operates in the best interest of the public, the industry and certified members of the AMCA by establishing clear guidelines, quality testing materials, and policies and procedures. Any and all activities of the certification board are fully funded by the AMCA, LLC.

### **Code of Ethics**

The AMCA believes in a high code of moral ethics. Should you become certified as a Clinical Medical Assistant by the AMCA, you must agree to abide by the following code of ethics:



1. Be dedicated to your profession. Participate actively in continuing education to enhance your knowledge of your profession.
2. Practice good judgment and be honest in all professional interactions.
3. Respect the rights of your clients and be consistently aware of HIPAA laws and how they apply to both you and your client.
4. Practice empathy towards your clients.
5. Support and respect state and federal mandates as they apply to your profession.
6. Report any wrong doings to the appropriate personnel.

The AMCA Certification Board reserves the right to suspend/revoke a member's Clinical Medical Assistant certification or take action for the following reasons:

1. The report of inappropriate behavior at your place of employment towards a patient.
2. Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. If someone is suspected of cheating, they will forfeit their right to retake the exam.
3. Any violation of state law as it pertains to that individual. Any individual that has been convicted of a felony and wishes to sit for an examination or renewal of their certification can contact the AMCA for consideration.
4. Dissemination of AMCA materials inconsistent with the actual purpose of testing.
5. Fraudulent statements regarding the AMCA in any form made by an individual or school particularly improper use of the mark received when successful – (CMAC).

## **Special Accommodations**

AMCA pledges to comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended (42 USC Section 12101, et. seq.), and with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000e, et seq.), to the best of their ability.

If you need special accommodations because of a disabling condition, you may ask for special testing services. This request must be submitted in writing and included with your registration. All requests are handled on an individual basis.

If you are requesting special accommodations you must submit a letter (IEP) from an appropriate healthcare professional that is licensed to evaluate the disability. The letter must be written on the healthcare professional's letterhead and include the professional's title, address and telephone number and date. The letter must also include a diagnosis of the disabling condition and explain why special testing accommodations are necessary. The letter must have an original signature from the professional and be dated no more than 2 years prior to registration of the exam date. All requests are handled on an individual basis, must be received prior to the scheduled test date, and are reviewed by the Compliance Department. The individual requesting accommodations will be notified via email or hard copy of the accommodations being allowed. The candidate can then provide the hard copy of granted requests to the test site.

## **Statement of Nondiscrimination**

The AMCA does not discriminate or support the discrimination of or against any individual on the basis of gender, ethnicity, political affiliation, age, religion, marital status, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

## **AMCA Certification Exams and Registration Fees**

The following lists the AMCA national certification examinations addressed in this handbook and associated fees:

Clinical Medical Assistant Certification	\$139
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## **Clinical Medical Assistant Certification**

A Clinical Medical Assistant certification allows candidates to participate in both front and back office activities. A CMAC may perform some or all of the following duties. However, they are not limited to just these responsibilities:

- Answer phones and schedule appointments
- Prepare statements for billing
- Communicate with patients
- Chart a patients history
- Take a patients vital signs
- Perform phlebotomy
- Prepare a patient for an EKG

It is your responsibility to know the laws concerning a medical assistant's scope of practice in the state in which they work.



On October 8, 2015, the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) granted American Medical Certification Association (AMCA) accreditation to the Clinical Medical Assistant Certification (CMAC) for demonstrating compliance with the *NCCA Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs*. NCCA is the accrediting body of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence. The NCCA Standards were created in 1977 and updated in 2003 to ensure certification programs adhere to modern standards of practice for the certification industry. AMCA joins an elite group of more than 120 organizations representing over 270 programs that have received and maintained NCCA accreditation. More information on the NCCA is available online at [www.credentialingexcellence.org/NCCA](http://www.credentialingexcellence.org/NCCA) or by calling 202/367-1165.

## **Practice Settings**

Clinical Medical Assistants can perform a wide-variety of functions as well as work in a multitude of settings. The following are settings in which they could possibly work:

- Doctor's office
- Surgical Center
- Clinic
- Nursing home

- Long-Term care facility
- Acute care facility
- Ambulatory clinics
- Rehabilitation facilities

### **The Role of a Clinical Medical Assistant Certification**

Your role as a medical assistant is vital to today's allied health care field. You will be entering a field that has a great need for trained professionals. You will also meet many obstacles and challenges both mentally and physically. Maintaining a good sense of ethics is extremely important in the medical field.

Administrative duties include telephone coverage, scheduling, maintenance of medical records, and the management of all correspondences.

\*Clinical duties vary according to State law and you should only perform those duties that are within the scope of your practice.

### **Candidate Eligibility Requirements**

The population eligible to sit for the AMCA examinations must be 18 years of age, possess a high school diploma or equivalent and meet one of the below requirements:

- Graduate from a training program (proof of completion is required)
  - Training programs focus on providing instruction in order to prepare candidates for employability in the allied healthcare field. Certification enhances that employability.
- Or have 2 or more years of current work experience immediately preceding the date of application, and be presently working in that field – Candidates must provide proof of employment/ experience in the form of a written letter and high school diploma or equivalent. Letters should include daily responsibilities and tasks performed as part of your role. Letters are verified and must be written on company letterhead. Two years work experience should provide the candidate with ample experience in the allied healthcare field for their specific job position. (NJ Candidates are not eligible for this option in which to test as it violates N.J.A.C. 13:35-6.4 – all NJ candidates must graduate from a State of NJ approved Program)



*California Candidates:* Per Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) section 1366.31(b)(3) *those candidates applying for the Medical Assisting certification exam must meet one or more of the following:*

- A. Graduation from a medical assistant training program accredited by an accreditation agency recognized by the United States Department of Education;
- B. Graduation from a medical assistant training program in a postsecondary institution accredited by an accreditation agency recognized by the United States Department of Education or an institution approved by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education;
- C. A minimum of 2 years experience as a practicing medical assistant within 5 years immediately preceding the date of examination;
- D. Military training or schooling equivalent to that described in subsections (A) or (B) above;
- E. Employment at the time of certification as an instructor in an accredited medical assistant program or institution.

The laws and regulations pertaining to minimum requirements and the allied health industry vary by state. It is highly recommended that test candidates familiarize themselves with their particular states rules and regulations regarding certification requirements.

Exams are offered as either paper/pencil or online through a proctored test site.

### **General Information**

#### **Student Pay: (candidates responsible for exam fee)**

If the institution has chosen to have the candidates individually pay for the exam, the following registration procedure applies:

#### **Online Registration:**

The quickest and most efficient way for candidates to register for an AMCA exam is to visit our website at [www.AMCAexams.com](http://www.AMCAexams.com) and complete the online registration form with a debit or credit card to secure your exam date and time. The candidate will receive an email confirmation of their exam, date and location.

***In order to serve you better, Pre-Registration is strongly recommended.***

**Phone** – Customer service can answer any questions you have or assist you with the registration form. Please call: 888-960-2622 x116.

**School Pay: (School responsible for exam fee via invoice)**

If the institution has chosen to have the exam fee built into the tuition, the following registration procedure applies:

The quickest and most efficient way for candidates to register for an AMCA exam is to visit our website at [www.AMCAexams.com](http://www.AMCAexams.com) and complete the online registration form using the drop down box and choose "Institution Pay". Choosing Institution Pay allows the registration process to be complete with no credit/debit card information needed. The candidate will receive an email confirmation of their exam, date and location.

Schools that have created their own profile can register their own students as well as print an exam roster of the upcoming test date.

Pre-registration allows the AMCA to prepare pre-printed sign in sheets with candidate information to allow for verification on the suggested test day.

It is recommended that candidates create their own profile on the website [www.AMCAexams.com](http://www.AMCAexams.com). Once testing is complete, they can view their test results, print a transcript, schedule a retake, access AMCA documents or complete continuing education right through their own student portal.

**Cancellation Policy/Refund Policy**

If any exam is cancelled, close or filled, exam fees will be refunded. No exam fee will be refunded for any other reason on or after the scheduled exam date. If a candidate wishes to cancel an exam date, a written notice must be submitted 5 business day in advance of the original exam date in order to receive a refund, minus \$15.00 per exam administration fee.

**Retaking the Exam**

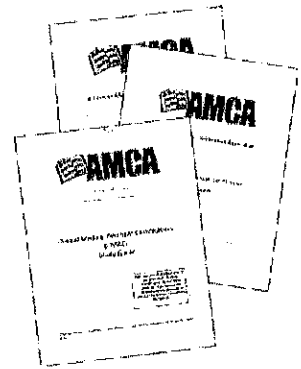
If a candidate initially fails the clinical medical assistant exam, they will have two more opportunities to retake the exam at a discounted cost. Candidates cannot take the exam before the end of the designated 30-day waiting period. The AMCA will attempt to provide additional study resources to the candidate if requested as it is the success of the candidate that is important to the AMCA. Upon the third unsuccessful attempt, remediation through the school

or a refresher course is recommended. Once the candidate provides evidence of a refresher course, he/she is eligible to sit for the examination at the same discounted price.

## **Exam Information**

### **Study Material**

Candidates are strongly encouraged to prepare for the Clinical Medical Assistant Certification exam in advance. The study guide is given to the candidate free of charge. The exam study guide is intended to be used as reinforcement for what is already learned. It is not intended to replace classroom learning or notes that have already been taken. Instead, the study guide can be used with the notes that have been taken and the books that have been available to the candidate to properly prepare. The student will also receive access to an online exam pre-test. The exam pre-test is designed to help the candidate get in test mode and provide a level of comfort with the online platform. The pre-test is also available in hard copy and can be delivered via email, in a PDF format.



The study material is delivered via email, in a PDF format.

### **Exam Format and Administration**

The AMCA Certification Exams are administered via paper/pencil or through the internet at any test site. The AMCA exams range from 100 to 240 multiple choice questions and candidates have from 180 to 350 minutes in which to complete the exam.

<b>Certification</b>	<b>Number of questions</b>	<b>Exam Time</b>
Clinical Medical Assistant Certification Exam	200	3.5 hours

### **What to bring to the testing center?**

Candidates will be expected to validate their identity with a current government-issued photo ID. A copy of the ID may be kept. If the photo ID cannot be verified, the test candidate will be denied entrance to the exam and will have to reschedule the test date. Test sites are sent pre-printed sign in sheets and if a candidate's name is not on the pre-printed sign-in sheet they will not be allowed to test.

### **What to expect at the testing site?**

Upon arrival at the testing site and verification of photo ID, candidates can expect a designated proctor to administer the online or paper/pencil exam in an appropriate format.

### **General Testing Guidelines for paper/pencil exams**

Exams are sent to the test site approximately 1-2 days before the scheduled test date. Each test site signs a Director's Oath that agrees to keep the exams in a secure place until the scheduled test date.

**The exam proctor will read aloud the following opening statement before testing is to begin:**

**As proctor for this exam, certain rules and regulations will be adhered to. If any testing irregularities present themselves in this session, I have the right to stop the testing session and remove the candidate in question.**

**Testing irregularities\*\* include, consulting notes/study materials or disturbing those around you. I will report any testing irregularities to the AMCA Certification Board. Are there any questions?**

#### **Proctor Rules:**

- Read aloud the rules and regulations to the examinees
- Reinforce the rules to ensure uniform testing conditions
- Verify, via photo ID, all pre-registered applicants. If the proctor is unable to verify the identity of the person intended to test, the proctor must deny entrance to the exam. The candidate can reschedule when the proper verification can be presented.
- Maintain a strictly enforced timed period for examination.
- Maintain order in the seating of all examinees.
- Maintain the confidentiality of exam information including questions, exam material and candidate information
- Cell phone use and any/all electronics are prohibited!
- Post allotted time for the examinees as follows: (100 questions = 2 hours, 150 questions = 3 hours, 200 questions = 3.5 hours)

- Ensure that all examinees used the lavatories prior to the start of the examination.
- Not answer questions after testing has begun.
- Have candidates sign in on the pre-printed exam attendance sheet
- Advise the candidate that the exam results will be returned to the school/testing center in approximately 14 days. AMCA will not release results to students directly.
- Have test candidates sign in on the final exam attendance sheet and check off that the proctor has read the opening statement.

## **General Testing Guidelines for Online exams**

### **Exams Administered Online**

Candidates/Test sites can choose to take/administer AMCA exams online through a web-based system called IE Links. The exam is identical to the paper exam except that the question answers are presented in shuffle format.

Registration forms are turned in approximately two weeks in advance. A day before the actual exam date, the students are registered in IE LINKS by the AMCA, with their email address (user name) and their password (initials and last four of their SSN). An automatic email is generated to the AMCA email and this is forwarded to the identified point-of-contact (proctor) at the test site the morning of the exam. For testing security purposes, testing sites are reminded to not release this list to anyone until the exam is ready to be proctored. As an additional security feature, the access to the exam is limited to a specified time frame as well as an additional password is required to access the exam. The log-in information is then disseminated to the student on the day of the exam. The student has the same amount of time to complete Clinical Medical Assistant Certification exam as the paper/pencil student does. The Log In information for each student is time sensitive; therefore if a student attempts to log-in after the allotted time, they are not granted access. As an additional security measure, the online exam does not have printing capabilities.

### **Exam Development**

The AMCA Certification Board ensured that the CMAC exam reflects the current practice of medical assistants by conducting a job analysis, a systematic process for determining the content of a credentialing examination

(other names for this process include occupational analysis, task analysis, practice analysis, and role delineation study). This process begins with the identification of work requirements for clinical medical assistants (i.e., job tasks) and ends with the development of a formal set of test specifications, also known as an exam blueprint, that delineates the knowledge related to safe and effective practice that will be included on the examination.

To ensure a comprehensive review of the task statements, the AMCA staff asked questions similar to those listed below to elicit feedback:

- Are there job tasks on the list that are not required to perform successfully as a medical assistant?
- What additional work activities contribute to successful performance of medical assistant?
- Does the task statement accurately reflect what is needed to perform successfully?
- Is each work activity grouped in an appropriate content domain?

AMCA periodically conducts job task analysis (JTA) studies to ensure exam specifications are current. In 2013, the AMCA conducted a CMAC JTA, which began with the identification of job tasks and ended with the development of exam specifications. In 2015, HumRRO reanalyzed the JTA data to update the 2015 CMAC exam blueprint in accordance with best practice.

### **Establishment of test blueprints**

In August 2013, the AMCA Certification Board (Board), consisting of an Executive Director and seven voting stakeholders, was established as an autonomous board to ensure that exams created by the AMCA are valid credentials. Board members are elected officials with the subject matter expertise necessary to represent different stakeholders in the management of the PTC. Detailed information about the Board overseeing the revision of the PTC can be found in the AMCA Certification Board Policies and Procedures Handbook.

The final blueprint is framed around the content domains with a specific number of test items assigned to each.

Upon the release of the new exam, an item analysis is completed as well as a cut score study. This information is necessary before a score report and certifications are issued to the student.

***Previous exam blueprint summary***

Content Domains	# Items	Weight
1. Anatomy & Physiology	21	10.5%
2. Phlebotomy	48	24.0%
3. EKG	27	13.5%
4. Safety/Infection Control	15	7.5%
5. Medical Law & Ethics	17	8.5%
6. Medical Office/Patient Care Skills	28	14.0%
7. Pharmacology	19	9.5%
8. Medical Terminology	25	12.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

***Table 2. Final 2015 exam blueprint summary***

Content Domains	# Items	Weight
1. Anatomy & Physiology	24	12.0%
2. Phlebotomy	50	25.0%
3. EKG	22	11.0%
4. Safety/Infection Control	39	19.5%
5. Medical Law & Ethics	22	11.0%
6. Medical Office/Patient Care Skills	29	14.5%
7. Healthcare Systems	14	7.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **Standard Setting-Determining the Passing Score**

The AMCA used the modified Angoff technique to set the cut-score for the 2015 CMAC exam. As a criterion-referenced cut-score technique, this method explicitly link test performance to an objective criterion that represents the minimum level of competence of a qualified certified professional. This process involved five SMEs (current CMAs and CMA educators that had previously worked as a CMA, with a minimum of 10 years of experience in the profession) reviewing the test, item by item, and estimating the likelihood that a "just sufficiently qualified" (JSQ) test taker would answer the item correctly.

The results of this process yielded a minimum passing score of 73% or 146 raw items correct, which the Committee applied to the 200 item examination currently in use.

## **Exam update and Item review process**

The following is the process for the annual updating of the Clinical Medical Assistant exam exam and for item review and revision.

- Determine which SME's will participate in the Annual Exam update
- Distribute to the identified SME's a guide to Item Writing and any other rules for making revisions
- Review Item Analyses from the past year to create a list of item statistics and item response frequencies
- Flagged items from the Item Analysis report will be specifically focused on. The SMEs will then decide if the flagged items will remain, should be removed or need revising.
- Each year, at least 10% of the items will be revised. (This percentage will also depend on the number of flagged items)
- Using the Angoff Standard Setting Study, a passing standard will then be developed for the new exam form. The focus will be on the new or revised items.

Once the exam is in publication, an item analysis will be done to identify any possible errors in the answer key and to evaluate the performance of the exam. The SMEs will review the item analysis and determine if any actions need to be taken.



## **Exam Scoring**

The AMCA exams were designed to be a representation of the competencies and knowledge necessary for entry-level clinical medical assistant's in today's workforce.

The clinical medical assistant certification exam is offered in two ways – paper/pencil or online.

Paper/pencil exams are scanned and scored using a Scantron (REMARK software) scoring machine. Online exams are scored immediately providing immediate results to the candidate through web-based software. Each school receives a score report of the entire test group (for those that Opted In) for both paper/pencil or online. All of the scores/results are stored on AMCA's servers and are backed up daily.

Exam results are sent directly to the school. Upon registering for the exam, the candidate agreement gives the option for the scores to be left off the score report with any personally indentifying information (Opt Out option). The Opt In option grants the AMCA permission to include the candidate's information in the score report.

Candidates also receive digital badges to share on Social Media – this is provided through the email given to the AMCA at registration.

Unsuccessful candidates receive an email indicating their grade, areas of deficiency (score report) and directions how to register for a re-take. Areas of deficiency are determined by the score report performed for each school.

Rescoring (Hand scoring) will only take place upon written request from an individual. Although a change in grade is highly unlikely, an individual can request his/her exam to be hand scored if they received a failing grade. No passing grade exam will be hand scored.

Exam results can be appealed under specific conditions in the Appeals Policy.

## **Appeals Policy**

### **Exam Appeals**

A candidate may contact the AMCA to challenge an exam grade or exam

administration error. Exam challenges can be in regard to content and or scoring – these challenges are reviewed and the Compliance Department will make a determination as to the validity of the challenge. Exam challenges must be submit in writing within 14 days of the original exam date. An AMCA Appeal Form can be found on the AMCA website under printable forms.

### **Eligibility Appeals**

The AMCA Certification Board reserves the right to deny registration or applications of individuals that do not meet the eligibility requirements set forth by the Board. Appeals to a denied application can be submit in writing to the Board within 30 days of the denied application. All appeals will be reviewed by the Board and responded to within 4-6 weeks of Appeal form submission. Appeals may be filed by submitting an AMCA Appeal Form found on the AMCA website under the printable forms.

### **Disciplinary Action Appeals**

The AMCA reserves the right to deny or remove a certification based on a disciplinary action taken against an individual. It is the responsibility of the candidate/certificate to submit an Exception Request/Appeals form and supporting documentation in the event he/she wishes to challenge the disciplinary action. This form must be submit to the Board within 30 days of the documented incident (if applicable). Appeals received will be reviewed by the AMCA Certification Governing Board. Appeals may be filed by submitting an AMCA Certification Appeal Form found on the AMCA website under the printable forms tab.

Once the Appeal form is received by the AMCA, candidates/certificants can expect a written response in approximately 30 days.

Appeal decisions by the Certification Board are final and are not subject to further appellate review.

### **Violation of Examination Procedures**

AMCA Certification Board has the right to invalidate a billing and coding specialist examination scores if it suspects that any irregularities or deviations from standard testing policies may have occurred during an examination administration. This includes but is not limited to testing irregularities

involving the candidate, test or agents administering the exam (proctor or test administrator). In the event of a candidate violating the testing rules of conduct, the Proctor can suspend the testing session, remove the candidate from the testing session and notify the AMCA. Once the proctor's allegations are investigated by the Board, it will then be determined if the candidate is eligible for a refund. The AMCA has the right to cancel test scores, and or deem a candidate ineligible to retake any AMCA exam. If necessary, the AMCA reserves the right to contact the candidate's employer, any regulatory body or law enforcement if necessary.

Exam candidates may appeal an invalidation of an exam score using the Appeals procedure noted in the Appeals section.

### **Confidentiality Policy**

Confidential information - Non-public information including, but not limited to, name address, social security number, bank account numbers, financial or financial aid information, medical information, certification number, etc.) is protected by federal state and local statutes. To protect AMCA's database personal information is accessible only by designated staff and contractors operating under a nondisclosure agreement. This database may also be used (such as pass rates, numbers of certificants, score trends, etc.) for the purpose of research reports and other published data.

Candidate information will remain confidential, with the exclusion of whether a candidate has a current/active certification. Unless required by law, written authorization by the candidate is needed to release test score information.

Additionally, test scores or pass/fail status will not be provided over the phone to anyone other than the candidate.

If a health care professional wished to verify any individual's certification, they can do so by phone 888.960.2622. An AMCA representative will verify the caller's identification and provide verification/certification expiration date. If needed, candidates can print a transcript form for employment purposes using their own portal on the AMCA website.

### **Keeping Certification Current**

The purpose of staying certified contributes to professional development by

requiring clinical medical assistants to stay current in the field and enhance their knowledge and skills through participating in continuing education. The AMCA and subject matter experts attempt to stay abreast of current events affecting the profession so therefore they review continuing education credits based on current events, industry mandates and relevance to the field.

The two-year time period\* also contributes to professional development because it:

- allows the certificant enough time to gain employment in the ever changing industry
- provides certificants enough time to gain their credits through their place of employment without the loss of work hours
- ensures that certificants do not go an extended period of time without education and exposure to professional development

The AMCA certification is good for 2 years\* from the date of testing. The AMCA requires 5 Continuing education credits per year; 10 for the two years.\* Policies for Continuing Education are established by the AMCA Certification Board. For example, if a candidate tests in February 2012 their certification is valid for 2 years – February 2014. We do allow a thirty (30) day grace period.

**\*California CMAC CE requirements:** California requires its Medical Assistant certificate holders to obtain a minimum of 60 hours of continuing education related to the practice of medical assistants over a 5 year period. All California candidates' credentials are good for 5 years and during that time frame must accumulate 60 hours of CE in order to renew.

The allied healthcare field is in constant change and all healthcare professionals must stay current with those changes. Education taken outside of the AMCA or through the AMCA are both convenient ways to keep the phlebotomy technician certification current.

Outside education/credits are accepted at 11.00 per credit and require the submission of a certificate of completion indicating the candidate's name, number of hours attended, date of attendance and the title of the course taken. Outside credits are reviewed based on current events, industry trends and relevance to the allied health industry. If the outside credits are deemed relevant, the equivalency is 1 hour equals 1 credit.

Outside credits are reviewed by the Continuing Education Department. If a candidate chooses to do any of the Volumes offered by the AMCA, once they complete the articles and answer the short series of questions and answers, they can submit the completed form to the AMCA through the AMCA website – [www.AMCAexams.com](http://www.AMCAexams.com). Upon receiving the completed form an email is sent to the candidate to confirm receipt in addition to a digital badge indicating completion of CE credits.

Continuing Education through the AMCA is available both online or paper/pencil format. Volume I, II, III, IV and V are all options for clinical medical assistant candidates to fulfill their required credits per year. AMCA candidates can call to request any of the volumes in addition to receiving them through a mailing during the year.

For five (5) CEU's it is 79.00. Outside credits are accepted at 11.00 per credit.

For candidates that are expired 6 months and are not working in the industry, they are still able to renew provided they meet the following conditions:

- They must complete 2 volumes of CE or provide evidence of outside CE\*
- 5 Credits through Medline University
- They have 30 days until the end of the next month to renew

For those candidates that are expired 6 months and working in the industry, they can provide a letter from their employer and 2 volumes of CE (or evidence of outside CE) to be renewed within 30 days.

### **Record Retention**

All records are housed at the AMCA headquarters located at 310 Passaic Ave Suite 204 B, Fairfield, NJ 07004. Since 2010, all paper records are kept in a locked, fire-proof cabinet until the required amount of time (5 years) has lapsed in which they can safely be destroyed. The AMCA has contracted with Shred It for future shredding if the current space provides not to be conducive.

Electronic records are kept on file (CMS) indefinitely and are not destroyed.  
Electronic data is backed up daily.