



**CCBMA**

**CALIFORNIA CERTIFYING BOARD FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANTS**

**CACMA**

**APPLICANT HANDBOOK**

**CALIFORNIA CERTIFIED MEDICAL ASSISTANT  
EXAMINATION**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The California Certifying Board for Medical Assistants (CCBMA) is a private non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation that has been administering the California Certified Medical Assistant exam since 1990. CCBMA is recognized by the Medical Board of California as an approved certification agency.

The goals of CCBMA are to provide a pathway for California medical assistants to demonstrate professional competency; to encourage career development through continuing education and recertification; and to continually improve the certification programs to reflect the changing requirements of healthcare in California.

This handbook is intended to be a resource for understanding the CCBMA exam application and testing process. It should be used in conjunction with other information available on the CCBMA website.

Please note that CCBMA policies and fees are subject to change.

### **About the CACMA Examination**

The **CA**lifornia **C**ertified **M**edical **A**ssistant examination is a comprehensive objective examination of the candidate's knowledge of general, clinical and administrative medical assisting. It is designed for the entry level medical assistant.

The CACMA exam is an all-inclusive updated version of the three California Certified Medical Assistant (CCMA) examinations which will be phased out by July 30, 2023.

### **How the Exam Was Developed**

CCBMA used a rigorous process involving the use of CCBMA credentialed medical assistants from all over California who served as subject matter experts. A Job Task Analysis (JTA) was conducted with the assistance of Professional Testing, Inc, an industry leader in assessment, evaluation and certification services. The JTA identified the tasks that

need to be performed in a competent and safe manner as well as the knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics associated with performing such tasks in the role of medical assistant. The JTA updated and validated the test items on the CACMA exam and ensured that CCBMA is adhering to standards of the credentialing industry.

### **CACMA Core Values**

The following principles are core values for the CACMA applicant and certificant:

Professional Standards: Respect and understand that as a healthcare professional the medical assistant is dedicated to providing competent support within the scope of practice as set forth by the Medical Board of California, with compassion and respect for human diversity and dignity.

Confidentiality: Provide services with full respect of the rights of patients and colleagues, and safeguard patient confidence and privacy in accordance with the law, including but not limited to HIPAA compliance requirements.

Professionalism with Integrity: Practice the profession with honesty, integrity and accountability, respecting all laws and regulations and avoiding any false, fraudulent or deceptive activities.

Improve Knowledge and Skills: Continue to learn, maintaining and improving all knowledge and skills necessary for the ever-changing healthcare environment.

Improve the Health and Well Being of the Community: Recognize a responsibility to contribute to the improvement of the community and betterment of public health.

## **EXAMINATION INFORMATION AND POLICIES**

### **Nondiscrimination Policy**

CCBMA does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, age, race, color, national or ethnic origin, disability or any other protected class in administration of its applications, examinations, or certification activities.

### **Create an Account**

Applicants must create an account on the CCBMA.org website. The CACMA examination application must be completed online with payment information and all required documentation can be uploaded to the account.

### **Required Documentation**

Applicants must meet the following documentation in addition to one of the eligibility requirements outlined below.

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Provide proof of current CPR certification
- Provide a copy of a US Government issued ID with your signature (driver's license, ID card or passport which must match the name on the application)

Name change corrections after submission of the application will be assessed an additional fee.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

Applicants who currently hold the credentials of CCMA-AC or CCMA-C (California Certified Medical Assistant) will not be required to provide the Statement of Proficiency or proof of current employment.

All other applicants must provide proof of training in administering injections and performing skin tests, and/or training in venipuncture and skin puncture for the purpose of withdrawing blood, as required by the California Medical Assistant Regulations. Proof includes a signed Certificate of Competency for injections and/or Venipuncture or Statement of Proficiency.

AND

must satisfy at least one of the following requirements:

Currently employed as a medical assistant by a licensed physician (MD/DO/DPM) in the United States or working as an administrative medical assistant in the United States.

- Upload verification of employment (current pay stub).

OR

Graduate of a medical assisting program in the United States within five years from a secondary, postsecondary or adult education program in a public school authorized by the Department of Education, or a graduate of a community college program or a postsecondary institution within the last five years accredited by an accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or approved by the Bureau for Private and Postsecondary Education.

- Upload a copy of your Certificate of Completion or unofficial transcript.

OR

Have at least two years employment comparable to full time (4160 hours) as a practicing medical assistant in the United States within the last five years.

- Upload a statement from previous employer(s) verifying the number of hours worked in the last five years.

OR

Currently employed as a medical assisting instructor in an accredited institution in the United States.

- Upload employment verification.

OR

Served in a role comparable to that of a medical assistant while enlisted in the **United States Military** within the last year or served in that capacity for at least two

(2) of the previous five (5) years.

- Upload a copy of DD214 or proof of current military employment.

### **Special Accommodations**

Applicants who require special accommodations on the day of examination **must request such exceptions in writing and it must be included with the initial application.**

Physical disability must be currently documented by a medical doctor. If you are requesting special accommodations because of a learning disability, documentation must be provided from a qualified professional dated within the last year. We will make every effort to accommodate such cases, but we reserve the right to deny requests that would jeopardize the security of the examination materials or the integrity of scores derived from the examination. The special accommodations form is provided on the CCBMA.org website.

### **Exam Format**

The California Certified Medical Assistant examination is in English. There is a 3-1/2 hour time limit to answer 160 multiple choice items developed from the examination blueprint. Included in these items are 20 Beta questions that do not count towards your final pass or fail results.

### **Testing Fee**

The California Certified Medical Assistant examination fee is \$250.

- Payments are made online via debit card, credit card or e-check.
- A \$40 administrative fee will be assessed for chargebacks.
- A \$75 nonrefundable processing fee will be assessed on withdrawn and denied applications.
- Fees are subject to change without notice.

### **Credential**

Applicants who pass the California Certified Medical Assistant examination are awarded the CACMA credential.

### **Certificate and Wallet Card**

For passing candidates, a certificate suitable for framing and a wallet card indicating the CACMA credential will be mailed to the certificant. Replacement certificates and wallet cards can be purchased and the California Certified Medical Assistant lapel pin can be purchased in the CCBMA website store to actively credentialed medical assistants.

### **APPLICATION PROCESSING**

CCBMA accepts applications online to provide an efficient, straightforward and convenient experience for all applicants. Applications are processed in the order they are received. Please allow 14 business days to receive your authorization letter via email with scheduling instructions. You may choose to utilize our expediting service, which includes providing your authorization via email along with a courtesy follow-up call within seven (7) business days. This service costs an additional \$75.

### **Confidentiality of Applicant Information**

All applicant information received by CCBMA (e.g., application, driver's license or U.S. government issued identification number, credit card information) is confidential and will not be shared without written permission. All test scores are confidential and will not be released to any person other than the candidate. Certification status is a matter of public record and will be maintained on CCBMA's website under the "**Verify A Certification**" tab. The information contains the certificant's name, credential, city and state, certificate number and active certification date.

### **Grounds for Denial of Eligibility**

Your application can be denied if one or

more of the following occurs:

- Failure to meet eligibility criteria.
- Providing false or misleading information.
- Nonpayment of fees, insufficient fees, or a declined credit/debit card.
- Failure to provide supporting documentation
- Failure to respond to CCBMA contact requests

If your application is denied by CCBMA, you will receive an email and a refund of your application fee minus a \$75 processing charge. **No refunds on expediting fees, reactivation of expired credentials or study material.**

## **THE TESTING PROCESS**

### **Scheduling with Pearson Vue**

Upon approval of your application, you will be contacted via email with scheduling instructions for the exam. CCBMA offers year-round testing at several locations through Pearson VUE. You will not be able to register for your exam until your application is approved.

### **Failure to Schedule or No Show for Scheduled Examination**

If you fail to schedule an authorized examination by the "must-test-by" date indicated on your authorization letter, you will forfeit all fees paid and will not be entitled to a refund.

If you fail to appear for a scheduled exam (no show), arrive more than 15 minutes after the scheduled start time for taking the exam and are refused admission to the exam, or change your exam date without providing 24-hour notice, you will forfeit all fees and will not be entitled to a refund.

### **Withdrawals, Cancellation and Postponement Policy**

If you wish to withdraw or cancel your application, you must do it in writing. Your application fee minus a \$75 processing charge will be refunded.

If you wish to cancel your scheduled exam, you must do so in writing to CCBMA not less than 15 days prior to your scheduled exam or the must-test-by-date indicated on your authorization letter. You must contact Pearson VUE directly at the phone number found on your authorization letter to have your scheduled appointment canceled and removed from their system. You will be required to provide proof of the cancellation. If you meet these deadlines, you will receive a refund of the application fee minus a \$75 processing charge.

To postpone and reschedule the exam, contact Pearson VUE directly at the phone number found on your authorization letter. You must test by the date that is specified in your authorization letter.

### **Retake Examinations**

In the event that you fail the CACMA examination on your 1<sup>st</sup> attempt, you are given 3 additional attempts (4 attempts in total). There is a 30 day waiting period in-between the 1-3<sup>rd</sup> attempts. If you have failed the 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt, you must wait 60 days before your 4<sup>th</sup> and final attempt. A retake application and fee must be submitted for each examination attempt. The retake examination fee is \$250.

### **Test Center Policy**

Pearson VUE testing centers provide computer-based test services for academic assessment, professional licensure and certification. To ensure security and uniformity for all testing candidates, Pearson VUE testing centers provide the resources necessary for secure administration of the exam, including video and audio monitoring and recording, and use of digital cameras to record the identity of examinees. At the beginning of the exam, you will be required to agree that both audio and video may be recorded in the testing room while you take the test. If you do not agree, you will not be allowed to complete the test and will forfeit your fee.

### **Test Center Rules**

Any violation of the testing policies and regulations outlined in this handbook may result in dismissal from the testing center and forfeiture of fees.

Test center staff monitor all test sessions for the exam. You must follow the instructions of test center staff.

Test center staff are not authorized to answer questions regarding exam content, test software or scoring.

You may not bring any personal belongings into the test area including, but not limited to, the following:

- Mechanical or electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, personal digital assistants [PDAs], calculators [will be provided upon request at the test center], smart watches, electronic paging devices, or radios). Use of electronic devices while at the test center will not be permitted.
- Outerwear (e.g. coats, jackets, headwear or gloves).
- Book bags, backpacks, handbags, briefcases or wallets.
- Books, notes, written materials, or scratch paper.
- Food, candy, gum or beverages.

A locker will be provided for your personal items. Keep in mind that the lockers are small. All stored mechanical or electronic devices must be turned off. Personal items and their contents may be subject to inspection.

When checking in, you will be asked to present eyeglasses to the test center staff for inspection. Smart eyewear will not be permitted in the examination room under any circumstances.

Breaks are not offered. The majority of candidates will finish the exam in under the allowed time.

### **RECERTIFICATION**

The purpose of recertification is to ensure that medical assistants certified by CCBMA continue to maintain the level of knowledge tested at the time of initial certification and demonstrate growth with continued education and training. Recertification ensures that certificants maintain a commitment to learning and encourages career development by staying abreast of evolving knowledge and skills.

All California Certified Medical Assistants must recertify every five years in order to maintain their active status. This time frame is a standard mandated by the Medical Board of California as being appropriate for the scope of the CACMA credential.

Recertification is achieved by accumulating 60 continuing education units (CEUs) that are relevant to the medical assisting profession, promote continuing competence, and fall within the scope of practice as defined by the Medical Board of California's Medical Assistant Regulations and CCBMA's Examination Blueprint. Included in the 60 CEUs must be proof of current CPR training, HIPAA, and Cultural Competency training. More information regarding how to earn and count CEUs is provided on the CCBMA website.

### **Recertification Fee**

The recertification fee is \$200 and non-refundable.

### **Recertification Processing**

An email reminder will be sent out six months prior to the end of active status. This reminder will be sent to the email address on file.

Certification will be considered active only through the last day of the month/year of the "active to" date. If needed, CCBMA will

allow a one-year grace period in which to complete the recertification process. You will be sent an email reminder when you are entering your grace period and when your grace period has expired.

**Please note: if your certification has expired, it is inactive.** An additional fee of \$75 will be required to reactivate the credential.

Submission of the recertification application and payment must be completed online and accompanying CEUs can be uploaded to your account.

Certified medical assistants granted recertification will receive a new wallet card, as well as an "active to" sticker to attach to their original certificate.

**DISCIPLINARY POLICIES  
AND PROCEDURES**  
**Grounds for Denial of  
Certification/Recertification**  
**Or**  
**Revocation of Credential**

1. Certification or recertification obtained by fraudulent or deceptive means.
2. Falsifying information including use of the certification mark when it has not been earned or when it has expired.
3. Candidates suspected of cheating will be subject to CCBMA Disciplinary Policies and Procedures.
4. Violation of the "CCMA Core Values" or any laws relating to the medical assisting practice which may include but are not limited to:
  - Possession, use or distribution of a controlled substance or drug.
  - Self-prescribing a controlled substance or drug.
  - Authorizing any prescription not prescribed by a physician.
  - Sexual or discriminatory harassment.
  - Performing work duties outside the

- Medical Assistant Scope of Practice.
- Breach of Non-Disclosure Agreement.

**Possible Disciplinary Penalties**

1. Denial of certification or recertification.
2. Reprimand.
3. Temporary suspension/revocation of credential.
4. Temporary suspension/revocation of credential

**Appeals Process**

1. Written appeal of denied certification, recertification or special accommodations may be made by an applicant within sixty (60) days of notification of the decision of the California Certifying Board for Medical Assistants.
2. A medical assistant holding the CACMA credential that has been suspended or revoked may appeal the decision of the California Certifying Board for Medical Assistants in writing within sixty (60) days of the notification.
3. CCBMA may communicate to consider the appeal in person, by telephone or other electronic means.

**RESOURCES**

**CCBMA**

[www.ccbma.org](http://www.ccbma.org)

**Pearson VUE**

[www.pearsonvue.com](http://www.pearsonvue.com)

- FAQs
- Find a test center
- View CCBMA's testing policies
- Preview CCBMA's Non-Disclosure Agreement
- Pearson VUE testing tutorial
- Take an online tour of a Pearson Professional Center

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[www.mbc.ca.gov](http://www.mbc.ca.gov)