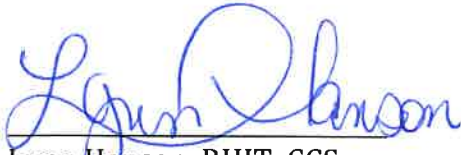


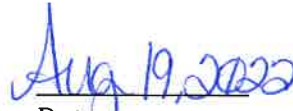
Panola College Medical Assisting




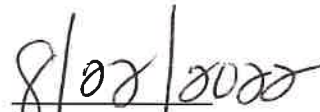
STUDENT POLICY HANDBOOK


The policies and procedures contained in the Medical Assisting Student Handbook have been approved by the following officials of Panola College:



Lynn Hanson, RHIT, CCS
Chair, Medical Assisting Program

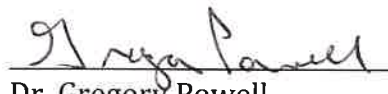

Date



Kelly Reed-Hirsch
Dean of Health Sciences, MPH, CHES


Date


Dr. Billy Adams
Vice President of Instruction


Date


Dr. Gregory Powell
President


Date

Message to Students

Welcome to the Medical Assisting program at Panola College. You have chosen a very exciting and rewarding profession. Our goal is to provide you with the knowledge and skills required to provide quality medical assisting services.

The purpose of this handbook, in addition to offering a word of welcome, is to share information. This information will better help you understand the MA program goals, mission, policies, the faculty teaching philosophies and our philosophies of MA. Medical assisting practitioners adhere to a professional code of ethics. Because of this, some MA policies differ from those of Panola College as described in the Panola College General Catalog and the on-line college student handbook, The Pathfinder. As an MA student, you are expected to follow the policies and guidelines from all three resources.

It is through cooperation between students and faculty that the common goal of learning is achieved. Competence in the MA profession is developed through diligence and hard work in the clinical environment as well as in the classroom. Your experience in the upcoming months will be both challenging and rewarding.

We are dedicated to your success and welcome your questions by phone or e-mail. Please refer to the MA programs website or course syllabi for specific methods for contacting us.

We look forward to sharing our knowledge and experiences with you.

Sincerely,

The Faculty and Staff of the MA Department

MA Program Faculty and Staff

You will have the opportunity to learn from several instructors with diverse backgrounds, as well as guest speakers from Clinical sites around the ArkLaTex. Below are the full time and part time staff members that comprise the MA faculty team.

Lynn Hanson, BAAS, RHIT, CCS – Chair of MA Program

Kim Bishop, RHIT, MLT(AMT) – Instructor

Jeffry Oney –BAAS, CCMA, NCMA– Instructor

Yvette Royal - Secretary

You are the reason we are here.

Each semester you will be given opportunities to let us know what we can do to enhance your educational experiences.

Table of Contents

MESSAGE TO STUDENTS.....	3
FACULTY AND STAFF.....	4
AFFILIATIONS.....	6
STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION.....	7
STATEMENT OF DISABILITIES.....	7
COURSE OF STUDY FOR MEDICAL ASSISTING PROGRAM.....	7
RISKS FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS.....	8
RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS.....	8
STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY.....	9
CAMPUS SECURITY.....	10
ACCESS TO MEDICAL ASSISTING HANDBOOK.....	11
STUDENT ETHICS.....	11
MEDICAL ASSISTING PROGRAM POLICIES	
I. REQUIRED CRITERIA.....	13
Admission.....	13
Age.....	13
Health.....	13
Pregnancy.....	13
Immunization.....	14
Required Vaccinations for Students.....	14
Acceptable Evidence of Vaccination.....	15
Criminal Background Check and Drug Screening.....	15
CPR Certification.....	16
Physical Examination.....	16
Additional Expenses.....	16
Graduating Students.....	16
II. PROFESSIONALISM.....	17
Attendance.....	17
Dependability.....	18
Effective Communication Skills.....	19
Ethical Conduct.....	18
Electronic Devices.....	18
III. DISCIPLINARY ACTION.....	19
IV. PROGRESS AND EVALUATION.....	19
Courses and Grades.....	19
Conferences.....	20
V. TOBACCO/SMOKING.....	20
VI. MEDICAL ASSISTING SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY.....	20
VII. UNIFORM/DRESS CODE.....	20
VIII. GRIEVANCES.....	21
IX. APPLIED EXPERIENCE POLICY.....	22
ATTACHEMENTS.....	24

MISSION STATEMENT

The Medical Assisting Program, like Panola College, shapes its mission around the needs of the people of the service area. Currently our community calls for more medical personnel, particularly in the allied health fields of Medical Assisting. This program seeks to fulfill that need.

This program teaches information and skills necessary for allied health professionals to provide care in a compassionate, competent, and ethical manner.

The focus of the Panola College Medical Assisting Program is preparing competent novice allied health professionals such as Medical Assistants.

Graduates with a Certificate in Medical Assisting may sit for the Certified Medical Administrative Assistant (CMAA) exam, Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) exam, and Certified Phlebotomy Technician (CPT) from the National Healthcareer Association (NHA).

AFFILIATIONS

CONTROLLING AGENCY:

The controlling agency is Panola College, Carthage, Texas.

ADMINISTRATION AND FACULTY:

President	Dr. Gregory Powell
Vice President of Instruction	Dr. Billy W. Adams
Dean of Health Sciences	Mrs. Kelly Reed-Hirsch
Chair, Medical Assistant	Ms. Lynn Hanson

ACCREDITATION AND APPROVAL:

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

AFFILIATED CLINICAL AGENCIES/FACILITIES:

Panola College MA Program is very fortunate to have various clinical affiliations throughout East Texas to provide our students with clinical experiences. We are grateful to these agencies for opening their doors to our students as guests. Panola College signs a legally binding affiliation agreement with each clinical agency stipulating that faculty and students will abide by the rules and regulations governing that agency while we are in the clinical facility.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION:

It is the policy of Panola College not to discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religion, sex, national or ethnic origin in admissions, educational programs, activities, scholarship and loan programs, athletic or other college administered programs, or in its employment policies. Panola College is committed to equal opportunities for physically or mentally handicapped students/individuals in compliance with federal regulations, Sec. 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

STATEMENT ON DISABILITIES:

Academic students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, who wish to request academic adjustments in the Allied Health Program, should notify the Disability Services office early in the semester so that the appropriate accommodations may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting academic adjustments must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services counselor. At the beginning of the class, the student must inform the instructor so that arrangements can be made to accommodate those needs.

Students with disabilities must meet program objectives without major or unreasonable accommodation to the school or clinical setting. An applicant would be considered ineligible when his/her physical, emotional and/or intellectual disability:

1. Prohibits the student from achieving the knowledge and/or manipulative skills required of the respective Medical Assisting Program.
2. Creates a potential hazard to the student and/or recipient of health care services, faculty or another student.

COURSE OF STUDY FOR MEDICAL ASSISTING PROGRAM:

Curriculum for the program can be found in the Panola College catalog-
https://catalog.panola.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=2&poid=148&returnto=71

ABILITIES AND SKILLS NECESSARY FOR THE ALLIED HEALTH PROGRAM:

As an Allied Health student and a beginning health care provider, it is necessary for the student to possess certain physical and mental abilities and related skills including but not limited to:

1. Physical proficiency and dexterity to perform the tasks related to the duties of the profession.
2. Mental/Emotional stability to demonstrate appropriate behavior at all times.
3. Energy to fulfill responsibilities required of the profession.
4. Adequate visual acuity and adequate color vision (with corrective devices as needed).
5. Adequate auditory acuity (with corrective devices as needed).
6. Speech which is understood by *all* persons across the life span.
7. Adequate tactile ability.
8. Manual dexterity of all limbs.
9. Strength to push, pull, and lift in accordance with assignments.
10. Strength/ability to carry, stoop, squat and bend in accordance with assignments.
11. Ability to:
 - a. Reach above shoulder area.
 - b. Stand/walk for long periods of time

- c. Organize and effectively manage time to meet deadlines.
- d. Perform neat and accurate work.
- e. Respond to increasing pressure, emergencies and workloads.
- f. Set priorities.
- g. Communicate effectively with the health care team and client, both verbally and non-verbally.

RISKS FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS:

There are potential risks during clinicals at the various facilities which may include, but are not limited to the following: Communicable and infectious diseases, cuts, punctures, slippery floors, electrical and chemical hazards, assault and battery.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS:

PRINTER SERVICE:

Wireless print stations are located in the M.P. Baker Library, the HNS building and in the Charles C. Matthews Foundation Student Center. The library offers copy and print services, while the Student Center and the HNS building only offer print services. To take advantage of the wireless printing students will need to create an account with *Wepanow* at:

<https://www.wepanow.com/campus-cloud-printing-technology.php>

Paper copies may not be made for students by the department secretary. Please do not ask.

TEXTBOOKS:

The faculty chooses textbooks for the Medical Assisting program based on currency and appropriateness to the curriculum design. Textbooks/e-books are available in the Panola College bookstore. Required textbooks/e-books will be noted in the course syllabus along with other recommended readings.

STUDENT FINANCIAL AID SERVICES:

There are numerous financial aid opportunities available through the Panola College Financial Aid office (see *Panola College Website*). Occasionally grants or scholarships become available specifically for health science students. Students are encouraged to have a financial aid application on file.

LIBRARY FACILITIES:

The M.P. Baker library on the main campus is also known as the Learning Resources Center (LRC). The LRC includes the library collection and the Instructional Media Services Department. The growing collection of books and audiovisuals supports all programs at Panola College. The library services are available on-line. Students in the Medical Assisting program may be given assignments that require the use of the LRC. It is the student's responsibility to know how to access the resources of the library. Orientation tours and reference classes are available on request.

SIMULATION AND SKILLS LAB:

Skills and Simulation laboratories are held in the HNS building and on the Marshall campus to provide the students independent and supervised practice of clinical skills and application of clinical practice. Faculty may refer students to the skills laboratory or simulation laboratory for return demonstration of selected competencies/skills. Use of these labs is a privilege and students must abide by all policies.

MESSAGES:

The department secretary will take only emergency messages for students. **Please encourage family and employers not to call the Medical Assisting Department except in emergencies.**

ADVISING SERVICES:

Advising services are available through Panola College MA Faculty. The primary function of the advising program is to help students adjust to the college environment as well as to provide academic and career counseling. Students in the Medical Assisting program may also receive career guidance from program instructors. Students are responsible for identifying advising needs (both academic and personal) and requesting assistance or referrals.

CONFERENCES:

Conferences will be scheduled individually at any time the instructors feel a conference is warranted. All instructors will have posted office hours. Students may request a conference at any time. If needed, the student may also schedule a conference with the appropriate Chair of the Medical Assisting Program to express any concerns or problems.

STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY

INFECTION CONTROL GUIDELINES

The Panola College MA program promotes safety for all students, staff, faculty, and patients. The MA program complies with accepted policies, standards, and guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and Standards for Nursing Practice for the State of Texas.

In the event a student becomes exposed to blood or body fluids, the exposure should be reported to the clinical instructor, program Chair, and the authorities in the health care agency. Guidelines from the agency for such exposure should be followed including documentation.

ACCIDENTS/INJURY

- It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor **IMMEDIATELY** if they are involved in a patient care incident. Appropriate action, as dictated by the facility's policy, will be taken.
- If any class room injuries occur to student- call 911, if appropriate, and notify Human Resources and the Vice President of Instruction.
- If an injury occurs to a student at the clinical site that warrants an emergency response call 911. If injury is not an emergency, the student must follow up with their medical doctor (at their own expense).
- An incident report must be completed, a copy kept in students file, and Human Resources notified.
- The student must obtain a medical release from their medical doctor and present it to the instructor before they can return to clinical rotation.
- Students who are unable to attend class because of extenuating circumstances such as illness, accident, hospitalization, or COVID-19-related reasons, should notify the instructor and be prepared to supply the instructor and others with any written verifications of the absence request. Absences will be considered on a case by case as related to extenuating circumstances as listed within the policies in this manual and the Panola Pathfinder. The Chair of the Medical Assisting Program in coordination with the course instructor and student will develop an individualized plan in response to specific needs.

CAMPUS SECURITY

Panola College strives to provide a safe and secure environment for students, faculty and staff. Students and employees are encouraged to report all crimes and unsafe conditions to the Campus Police. Campus Police are Texas Certified Peace Officers with full authority to enforce the law. The Campus Police Department maintains a close working relationship with local and state law enforcement agencies.

Campus Police are required to make official reports for all crimes or emergencies which are reported on campus. The information contained in these reports is made available upon request and online.

The Panola College campus and facilities are available for use by all students. Non-students may also have access to the campus by special arrangement. Section 51.203 of the Texas Education Code authorizes the college administration or its designated representatives to refuse admission, or the right to remain on campus, to any person who has no legitimate business with the college community. The police may request proper identification of individuals they encounter on college property, especially those persons encountered during the late-night hours, under suspicious circumstances or in response to reports from college community members.

The Campus Police provide pamphlets and brochures on crime prevention subjects, including theft prevention, rape, drugs and alcohol misuse. These materials are available free of charge in the Campus Police Department located in the Maintenance Building on the Panola College campus.

How to Report Crimes and/or Emergencies:

Police/Fire/Ambulance

From any cell phone, private resident hall phone and off campus phones: Dial 911

From office phones: Dial 911

For thefts, auto accidents with no injuries, etc. call:

Campus Police	(903) 693-1111
Carthage Police Department	(903) 693-3866
Center Police Department	(936) 598-2788
Marshall Police Department	(903) 935-4575

ACCESS TO MEDICAL ASSISTING STUDENT HANDBOOK:

All Medical Assisting students at Panola College are required to abide by the guidelines and policies set forth in this student handbook. Students in the Medical Assisting Program are also required to abide by the guidelines and policies in the **Panola College Catalog** and the on-line student handbook, *The Pathfinder*.

The Handbook for the Medical Assisting Program will be reviewed with the student after acceptance and/or advising into their respective program. All students must be aware of and abide by the policies contained therein.

Students will sign a statement before the first day of class to verify they have received and read the handbook and agree to abide by the guidelines set forth. [Attachment A](#).

Panola College Medical Assisting Program hereby reserves and retains the right to amend, alter, change, delete, or modify any of the provisions for the Medical Assisting Student Handbook at any time and in any manner deemed to be in the best interest of Panola College. Currently enrolled students will be informed of any changes.

STUDENT ETHICS

Students enrolled into the MA program are expected to behave in ways that reflect high ethical standards. The MA program expects students to adhere to the basic guidelines regarding ethical behavior in the classroom as defined in *The Pathfinder*. In addition to those guidelines the MA program has further clarified ethical expectations as described below.

Students in the MA program are expected to:

1. Follow the codes of conduct and policies described in this manual and any additional requirements included in the MA course syllabi.
2. Use their own knowledge and skill to complete examinations without referring to others' answer, class notes or other references unless specifically permitted by the instructor. Students who fail to comply with this standard can expect to receive a zero on the exam any may be subject to further disciplinary actions.
3. Use their own knowledge to write papers, analyze activities or compile research information. They shall not plagiarize, quote or copy other persons' works without giving proper recognition as stated in a standard style manual or resource. Students who fail to comply with this standard can expect to receive a zero on the assignment and may be subject to further disciplinary actions.
4. Assume that each assignment completed in class or outside of class is to be done without consultation of another current or former class member unless specifically and clearly permitted by the instructor. If the student is unsure, it is the student's responsibility to clarify this with the instructor PRIOR to submitting the assignment.

5. Students will test at home using the online proctoring service. The use of ANY outside resources while taking exams will result in an automatic ZERO. Everything you do is being recorded along with sound around you. If upon review of your exam, it is determined that you have cheated, you will receive a ZERO on the exam and your privileges of testing at home will be revoked.
6. Respect instructors and other learners.
 - They may not insult, slur, raise their voice to or degrade Panola College faculty or staff, instructors, other health professionals or students. (These expectations do not infringe upon a student's right to raise questions and request clarification, but they do define parameters in which the question or clarification is expressed.)
 - Students will refrain from engaging in side conversations during class. Students may not allow their cell phone to adversely affect the learning environment.
 - Students shall not use tobacco products or vapor products on Panola College campuses.
 - Students will honor commitments by being on time for classes, field trips, and clinical duties. When students are not on time or absent, they will follow the appropriate procedures. (Refer to attendance and absence notification procedures in this manual and in course syllabi.)
7. Respect the limited resources of furniture, fixtures, textbooks, computers, instructional technology, supplies, library books, and journals. Students shall not mutilate, deface, damage or withhold resources for their own use.
8. Conserve limited resources by using only supplies needed for completion of assignments and maintain equipment in good working order. They shall not waste supplies or misuse equipment. It is the student's responsibility to report any damaged resources to the course instructor or MA program chair.
9. Assist in maintaining class and laboratory rooms in good order. They shall not leave these rooms dirty, cluttered, littered or in disarray or disorder upon completion of their assignment in each room.
10. Complete all assignments by the scheduled date and time or make satisfactory arrangements with the course instructor for an extension. Students should not expect to receive equal consideration in grading unless such arrangements are made.
11. Comply with and act upon safety procedures when working with peers, patients and equipment whether in class, lab, or clinic. Under no circumstance shall a student endanger the safety and welfare of patients, other students, faculty and staff.
12. Comply with all policies and procedures established by the Medical Assisting Department and all clinical facilities. This includes expectations outlined in each MA course syllabus. They shall not exempt themselves without specific permission by a faculty member or clinical educator.
13. Respect the confidentiality of patient information regardless of source (patient, therapist, records)

14. Respect the confidentiality of information shared in the classroom. All discussions held in the classroom, lab or clinical facilities are to be considered confidential in nature.
15. Work in cooperation with and respect for peers and other health care team members.
16. Respect the property and property rights of the MA program and other allied health faculty and staff, all allied health students, clinical facility and staff and patients. They shall not remove or borrow property without permission and shall not damage or misuse Panola College property, or any clinical-related properties.
17. Respect other student's projects. Students shall not handle, steal, alter, deface or otherwise harm another student's project, especially in a manner which might cause the student to earn a lower grade.
18. Monitor and maintain current CPR and immunization status as required by the MA program.
19. Honor commitments made with peers, College faculty, staff, and clinical educators. This includes timely notification in advance, when unable to keep a commitment. Clinical site or learning site abandonment (leaving without notice and/or permission) is grounds for dismissal from the Program.
20. Function within the role of a student. If you are unsure if certain actions are outside of the role and scope of a student, ask before acting.

MEDICAL ASSISTING PROGRAM POLICIES

I. REQUIRED CRITERIA:

1. **Admission:** The Medical Assisting programs are "Open Admission" programs. There is no application or interview process. Any student that meets the criteria, is admitted to the program and may register for courses after meeting with an advisor.
2. **Age:** Student must be at least ***seventeen (17) years old (to attend clinical rotations).***
3. **Health:** Student must be physically and mentally capable of performing the necessary tasks and skills required of the profession. Please speak to the instructor **IMMEDIATELY** if you have any functional limitations and complete the ***Limitations and Liability Release Form – Attachment B.***
4. **Pregnancy:** In order to enter or remain in a Medical Assisting Program, a pregnant student **MUST** submit the following:
 - A statement from her physician as to any limitations while in or continuing in the program. *This must be provided before going to clinical:* A "limitations and liability" witnessed document – Attachment B- from the student to the effect that neither the school nor the clinical facility will be held responsible for any unforeseen consequence, completed **prior** to clinical.
 - A pregnant student who does not have a current negative tuberculosis (TB) skin test must present a document from her doctor stating she is free from tuberculosis, **prior** to clinical.

- If student is unable to provide required documentation **prior** to clinical the student will receive a grade of “F” or “No Credit” for the course and will not be allowed to complete/start clinical.

5. **Immunizations:** Source of immunization requirements: Title 25 Health Services, Part I, Subchapter B, §§97.64 of the Texas Administrative Code (updated July 28, 2016).

All required immunizations must be kept current. Students must supply proof of required immunizations by the deadline provided at orientation (demerits will be issued for not meeting immunization deadlines). In addition, students must meet the college immunization requirements as well as any individual facility requirements when attending clinical.

Required Vaccinations for Students Enrolled in Health-related Courses in Institutions of Higher Education:

This section applies to all students enrolled in health-related courses, which will involve direct patient contact. Students may be enrolled while obtaining the required vaccines but cannot be in simulation or clinical until vaccination status is current.

- One dose of tetanus/diphtheria/acellular Pertussis (TDAP) is required followed by TD every 10 years.
- Students who were born on or after January 1, 1957 and do not present with a positive MMR titer must show acceptable evidence of vaccination of two doses of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine administered since January 1, 1968 and a positive rubella titer.
- Students shall receive a complete series of hepatitis B vaccine (3) **OR show serologic confirmation of immunity (titer)** to hepatitis B virus. Shots in progress must be #1 documented by the deadline provided at orientation, #2 one month after first dose, and #3- six months after first dose. If, after six (6) doses of vaccine, the student produces a negative titer then the student shall be deemed a non-responder and is considered to have met the criteria.
- Students shall show documentation of a positive varicella titer. Students showing a negative titer shall receive the varicella vaccination and titer a second time.
- Students shall show documentation of annual flu vaccine.
- An annual negative TB test (ppd or Quantiferon Gold) must be documented. If positive, an annual negative chest exam must be verified by primary provider.
- While Panola College does not require students to have the COVID vaccine, some of the clinical sites do require it. If students are placed at a clinical site which does require the COVID vaccine, students will be required to show proof or a facility exemption form.

All students are required to sign either an **Immunization Agreement – Attachment C** or provide a Declination of Immunization.

- Declination of any immunization must follow Department of State Health Services Policy Title 25 Part 1 Chapter 97 Subchapter B Rule 97.62 of the Texas Administrative Code:
<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/exemptions.aspx>

- Students may also be required by clinical facility to complete a declination of immunization.

Polio vaccine is not required but students are encouraged to determine they are immune to poliomyelitis.

Acceptable Evidence of Vaccinations:

- Vaccines administered after September 1, 1991, shall include the month, day and year each vaccine was administered.
- Documentation of vaccines administered that include the signature or stamp of the physician or his/her designee, or public health personnel is acceptable.
- An official immunization record generated from a state or local health authority, such as a registry, is acceptable.
- A record received from school officials including a record from another state is acceptable
- **Laboratory results must be provided for titers:** Serologic confirmation of immunity (titer) for measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, and varicella illnesses are acceptable if they consist of a laboratory report that indicates confirmation of immunity. Laboratory interpretations and/or reference ranges must be included on report for confirmation.

6. Criminal Background Check and Drug Screening: The purpose of a certified background check and drug screen policy is to:

- Promote and protect patient/client safety.
- Comply with clinical affiliates that require a student background check and drug screening as a condition of their contract.
- Provide early identification of students who may have difficulty meeting licensing/certifying/registry agencies' eligibility for licensure/certification/registration requirements.

The student will sign a *Background Check Consent – Attachment D* and a *Drug Screen Consent – Attachment E*. Costs for these tests is part of course fees. Any additional testing required, such as confirmatory or random testing, will be the responsibility of the student.

The background and drug screening company will be chosen by Panola College. Instructions will be given to students for obtaining the drug screen and background check. The results of the drug screen and the background check will be provided directly to the MA department and kept in confidential paper or electronic files and archived as indicated by accrediting agency requirements.

In addition to the Texas Health and Safety Code Chapter 250.006, Panola College reserves the right to refuse admission to any applicant to the Medical Assisting Program based on what is reported on background check regardless of the date of offense.

Sex offender conviction, regardless of the date of the charge, is automatically disqualifying for the Medical Assisting program.

Students that take medications will need to complete a *Student Medical Record – Attachment F* prior to the drug screen. A refusal to test, a tampered with or an adulterated specimen, and/or a confirmed positive drug test will result in immediate dismissal from the

program for the current semester. Students can request a conference with the MA Chair to discuss re-enrollment options for subsequent semesters. *Due to insurance risk and liability, students on mood-altering prescribed controlled substances will not be allowed to participate in clinical experiences until cleared by the appropriate Medical Assisting Chair and Dean of Health Sciences.*

- **Student Rights:** If the student believes his or her background information is incorrect, he/she will have an opportunity to demonstrate the inaccuracy of the information to the investigating agency. All researching of court records and documents will be the responsibility of the student. Students may appeal if issues related to the background checks are not resolved. Appeals are to be submitted to the agency responsible for the background check procedures.
7. **CPR Certification:** MA students are required to hold a current cardiopulmonary resuscitation card in Basic Life Support for Health Providers while enrolled in MA program. Students are required to take CPR prior to the beginning of the first clinical course, MDCA 1360 (cost is covered in course fees). Certification is valid for two years. Students who take longer than two years to complete the curriculum will be required to retake the course through Panola College Continuing Education for an additional fee.
 8. **Physical Examination:** Students are required to have a physical examination before attending clinical rotation. See [Attachment G](#). Form must be completed, signed by student and primary provider and will be kept in the student's file. If a student has a mental or physical issue that could interfere with their education should meet with the ADA counselor.
 9. **Additional Expenses:** In addition to fees collected at registration, other expenses will be incurred. The following are only mean to serve as a guideline, as expenses may vary.
 - Books and fees (as required).
 - Confirmatory and/or random drug testing.
 - A Stethoscope.
 - Watch with second hand.
 - Uniforms/monogramming/shoes as detailed in section VII.
 - Clinical sites are chosen to provide the best experience available for a student.
 - Clinical sites may be as far as 70 miles or greater from Carthage.
 - **Optional expenses:** cap, gown, stole, invitations (purchased through bookstore for students participating in graduation ceremonies).
 - **Don't forget to budget for childcare!**
 10. **Graduating Students:** The graduating student will be responsible for the following:
 - Personal pin and stole
 - Cap and gown
 - Graduation Application must be filled out the semester student is due to graduate.
 - More details about graduation will be provided to the student during the semester of graduation.

TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM CLINICAL SITES IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT.

II. PROFESSIONALISM:

Success in one's career is almost as dependent on professional behavior as on one's academic knowledge and abilities. Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior in the classroom and in all activities associated with this course. Medical Assisting students are responsible for being professional on campus, in class, at clinical sites, and in the general public while in uniform. Students are expected to develop and use effective interpersonal and team skills. Students should relate well to people, show respect for others, deal tactfully and effectively with others, influence as opposed to direct, provide constructive criticism without alienating others, negotiate or mediate when appropriate, exhibit openness to new ideas, and demonstrate a positive attitude. It should be understood that the classroom is to be used for scheduled classes. The classroom IS NOT to be used for socializing or any inappropriate behavior. Food and chewing gum are not permitted during classroom activities.

Please read the following carefully. ANY violation of this professionalism policy will result in reprimand of the student UP TO AND INCLUDING DISMISSAL.

All Medical Assisting Students are responsible and will abide with the following:

1. **Attendance:** Regular and punctual attendance of classes and laboratories is required. In face-to-face classes, the instructor will take roll at each class meeting and absences will be noted. In online classes, attendance is considered as online participation in all activities and discussions. The instructor will take roll at each class meeting and absences will be noted.
2. From the [Pathfinder](#):
Class Attendance Regular and punctual attendance of classes and laboratories is required of all students. When a student has been ill or absent from class for approved extracurricular activities, he or she should be allowed, as far as possible, to make up the work missed. When an instructor feels that a student has been absent to such a degree as to invalidate the learning experience, the instructor may recommend to the Vice President of Instruction that the student be withdrawn from the course. Instructors may seek to withdraw students for non-attendance after they have accumulated the following number of absences:

Fall or spring semesters:

5 absences, MWF classes

3 absences, TR classes

2 absences, one-day-per-week class

Summer Sessions:

2 absences, four-days-a-week classes

2 absences, two-evenings-a-week classes

The student is responsible for seeing that he or she has been officially withdrawn from a class. A student who stops attendance in a class without officially withdrawing from

that class will be given a failing grade; consequently, the student must follow official withdrawal procedures in the Student Success Center.

3. If a student accrues more absences than defined by the Pathfinder, the student will be dismissed from the program.
 - Attendance at all clinical assignment and exams are mandatory. “No-shows” to clinical without valid excuse (explained below) will not be tolerated and may result in dismissal from program. There will be no make-up exams allowed without a valid excuse.
 - **Valid Excuses** for absences:
 - Extreme illness (requiring hospitalization, contagion, etc.)
 - Birth of child
 - Mandatory court appearance
 - Death of an immediate family member (father, mother, grandparent, sibling, spouse, or child).

Student must provide supporting documentation before make-up exam or clinical schedule is altered. All documentation will be verified. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the instructor for make-up work or exams and to provide documentation.

- **Tardies:** Tardiness is rude and disrespectful to the instructor and other students. At the instructor’s discretion, students who arrive late may be restricted from entering the class or exam. Chronic tardiness will not be tolerated and is a direct violation of the Professionalism policy. Chronic tardiness is defined as more than 3 tardies in one class during a semester and will result in the student receiving a half demerit for each tardy thereafter.
4. **Dependability:** The student meets assignment deadlines and follows through to completion of responsibilities.
 - You are responsible for what goes on in class EVEN if you are not there. Check your calendar and be prepared when you return to class.
 - **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED!** Technical difficulties (printer didn’t work, ran out of ink, couldn’t open file, etc.) are not valid excuses. Neither is forgetting your paper or forgetting to print it. Do not come to class late because you were printing your paper, and do not ask to leave early to print it. Complete your work on-time and anticipate possible problems. Excuses are not acceptable in this program or in the healthcare field.
 5. **Effective communication skills:** The student listens, speaks using correct grammar and without excess fillers, (e.g. *um, you know, like*) or inappropriate language. Cursing, profanity, sexual remarks, or any related gestures will not be tolerated on campus, at clinicals, or while the student is in uniform (even off campus). This will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary procedures.
 6. **Ethical conduct:** The student maintains honesty, integrity, and confidentiality of patient, provider, fellow student and college information. Each student will sign a ***Confidentiality Agreement – Attachment H***. **Respect should be shown to instructors, patients, other students, and staff at facilities as well as the general public. Foolishness and fighting are never appropriate.** Scholastic honesty is expected from each student. Scholastic dishonesty shall include but not be limited to cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion.

- Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing on assignments will receive an immediate “F” in the class and will not be allowed to continue in the program.
 - Copy/Paste from the internet or another person is plagiarism.
 - Two or more students “sharing” answers and/or copying and turning in identical/similar classwork is considered cheating/plagiarism.
 - Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, or soliciting, in whole or in part, the contents of an un-administered test.
 - Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for one’s self, to take a test.
 - Bribing another person to obtain an un-administered test or information about an un-administered test.
- **DO YOUR OWN WORK!**
- No hats or caps may be worn during testing.
- A grade of zero for the test will be recorded if there is evidence of verbal or non-verbal communication between students, use of a cell phone, or if information related to test material is found on or in the vicinity of the student; the student may be disciplined as outlined in the student handbook.
- If upon review of your exam, it is determined that you have cheated, you will receive a ZERO on the exam and your privileges of testing at home will be revoked.

7. **Electronic Devices:** Electronic devices such as cell phones, tablets and laptops will be allowed in the classroom and clinical at the instructor’s discretion. Failure to follow the instructor’s directions will result in one warning and then an “F” in the class.

III. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

When students make poor choices, especially those violating the policies described in this handbook, it is the MA faculty’s responsibility to meet with the student individually to provide feedback and help the student learn from the situation. In each case, a *Counseling and Disciplinary Action form – Attachment I* will be completed by the instructor/chair. The student will be required to sign the form. The student’s signature does not necessarily indicate the student agrees with the statements made on the form(s), only acknowledges the issues stated on the form were discussed and the student had an opportunity to review the form(s) and make comments. Poor Choices involving violations of policy in this handbook will result in the student earning a violation or a demerit. Two violations convert to a demerit, even if unrelated. **If a student receives a total of 3 demerits throughout the course of the program, the student will be dismissed from the program.**

IV. PROGRESS AND EVALUATION

1. **Courses and Grades:** Academic integrity and forward progression through Medical Assisting Program must be sufficient. Students that neglect coursework will be removed from the program according to the following rules:
 - MA students must receive a grade of “C” or better in all Medical Assisting department courses (courses beginning with HITT, PLAB, HPRS, or MDCA). Students receiving a grade lower than “C” in a Medical Assisting department course will be required to REPEAT that course. If a student receives a **total of three or**

more final grades of “D” or “F” in any Medical Assisting course or combination of courses- the student will be dismissed from the MA program.

- Any student receiving an “F” due to disruptive behavior will not be allowed to progress in the program.

2. **Conferences:**

Individual conferences with students will be held whenever the Instructor or the student finds it necessary. Confidential discussions will take place, and the conference will be documented. A counseling form will be used and will be kept in the students file and a copy given to the student (See [Attachment I](#)). This form will be used as documentation of counseling, warnings, and reasons for “F” in a course.

V. **TOBACCO/SMOKING:**

Tobacco use of any kind is **NOT ALLOWED AT CLINICAL, ON CAMPUS (INCLUDING PARKING LOTS) OR IN UNIFORM** (even if you are “off campus”- on public OR private property). While you are wearing your Program uniform you are representing Panola College- ***You may NOT smoke while in uniform.*** Do not smell of smoke when you arrive at clinical or classroom. If you reek of smoke you will be told to immediately leave the clinical site/classroom and receive a zero for any assignments/activities/exams given that day.

VI. **MEDICAL ASSISTING SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY**

Any student enrolled in a Medical Assisting program will be tested for drugs on admission and at the beginning of each clinical semester. In addition, testing will occur when there is a reasonable suspicion that the student is under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs, i.e. drugs which are controlled substances under federal law that are not being used under the supervision of a licensed health care professional (as prescribed), during probationary period, or otherwise in accordance with the law. The Student will be subject to disciplinary guidelines as indicated in the Student Handbook for Panola College and/or the department.

Procedure:

- Students will be asked to submit to drug screening in the following circumstances:
 - Observable indication of actual use or impairment such as slurred speech, lack of coordination, incoherence, marijuana or alcohol odors
 - Possession of drugs, apparent paraphernalia or alcoholic beverages.
 - Detailed, factual and persistent reports of misuse by multiple colleagues.
 - Abnormal or erratic behavior, such as sudden outburst, mood swings, hostility or unusual anxiety which suggests possible drug use or alcohol misuse.
 - Involvement in suspicious accidents.
 - Apparent lapses in judgment or memory.
- Faculty and students will adhere to the following testing guidelines:
 - The student will sign consent to undergo drug screening upon admission (see [Attachment E](#)).
 - The instructor/faculty/staff who witnesses any student behavior that seems suspicious (see above) after admission will document observations and confer with Program Chair. If the program chair is the faculty member concerned about the student’s behavior or if the program chair is unavailable, the conference will be with the Dean of Health Sciences or Dean’s designee.

- A request for a drug screen will be initiated and a Random Drug Test Consent will be signed by the student and directions about testing will be given.
- If the student refuses to consent to drug screening, the student will be immediately dismissed from the program.
- The student is excluded from all clinical/field and/or classroom and lab activities pending results of a random drug screen.
- During the review process with the program chair, the student will have the opportunity to:
 - Explain the cause of the positive drug screen
 - Provide the name of the physician authorizing any prescription medications.
 - The Dean or Director will contact the attending physician for verification. If verification is obtained, the student will be monitored to assure medication use is appropriate.
 - Any evidence of impairment (inability to function in the role defined by the program) due to prescribed medications will result in probation. The student, in collaboration with his/her physician and the program chair will develop a plan for reducing the impairment. Failure to develop or follow the plan will result in dismissal from the program.
 - Any evidence of impairment due to misuse of prescribed medication will be documented and result in dismissal from the program.
- If drug screen is positive and unexplained, the student will be:
 - Dismissed from the program (see readmission below)
 - Reported to the state licensing agency, if applicable
- The student may appeal the dismissal using the student Appeal Procedure in the Student Handbook (Pathfinder, online).

Student Readmission

If a student failed an admission drug screen or a random drug screen and was dismissed from the program, they can request an interview with the program chair to apply for re-enrollment the following semester. Any student allowed to return to the program will be in a probationary period for 1 semester. During that probationary semester the student must agree to 3 random drug tests, at the student's cost. A positive random drug screen during the probationary semester is permanent dismissal from the MA program.

VII. UNIFORM / DRESS CODE:

THE UNIFORM DRESS CODE HAS BEEN FORMULATED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF MEDICAL ASEPIS, SAFETY, AND PROFESSIONAL PRIDE AND ETHICS. THIS DRESS CODE APPLIES TO THE CLASSROOM **AND** CLINICAL SETTING.

The MA students shall wear their uniforms for class, clinical assignments and skills lab or when officially representing the MA program. Staff at the clinical site may refuse student's access to patient information if the student is not properly attired or identified as a student of the College.

- **Uniform:** *(student's expense)* (MA=Navy Blue) Scrub uniform of program choice. Uniform must be clean, *free from wrinkles*, and in good repair. A matching scrub jacket may be worn for warmth but sweaters, hoodies, or other jackets are not permitted at all during clinical or in the classroom. Students may wear a white, black, gray, or navy-blue long sleeve shirt underneath scrubs for warmth. If student desires a scrub dress or skirt for personal or religious reasons, the length of skirt must fall at or below the student's knee.

- **Shoes:** (*student's expense*) neutral-colored closed-toe and closed-heel athletic shoes. Must be clean and in good repair. No high heels, clogs, sandals, etc. Soles must have good non-slip soles.
- **Name Tags:** Clinical Name tags will be provided by Panola College. Name tags must be worn at all times in the clinical and the classroom setting. Program patch or embroidery will be placed on the left front shoulder of the scrub top and jacket.
- **Good grooming:** includes daily bath with the use of an antiperspirant or deodorant. (Perspiration and odor increase with physical activity, nervousness, and excitement). Good oral hygiene should be maintained. A report from instructors, patients, family, staff, or clinical instructor regarding body odors of any nature (including smoke) will result in counseling.
 - **Hair:** (men and women) must be kept clean, neat, and off the collar and professional in appearance. Long hair must be kept up and off the shoulders. All MA students with hair longer than shoulder length must have hair tied back in clinical and skills environments. No un-natural hair coloring will be allowed, (bright pink, red, purple, green, etc.) Male students: Beards and moustaches are allowed if kept neatly trimmed.
 - **Fingernails:** Fingernails must be kept short and clean. Only clear nail polish is allowed. No colored polish. ***No artificial fingernails will be worn by Medical Assisting Students in the classroom, clinical or skill lab setting. Artificial nails are a breeding ground for bacteria and are not allowed under any circumstances. Students presenting to class or clinical with artificial fingernails will be dismissed from class and reprimanded. Students that refuse to or do not remove artificial nails will be reprimanded- continued failure to remove artificial nails will result in dismissal to the program.***
- **Visible tattoos:** must be covered at all times while representing Panola College, both in the classroom, during clinical, and while in Panola College uniform. This is a requirement. If student is unwilling to cover any tattoos, the student will not be allowed to proceed in the program, and will result in receiving a grade of "F" in current courses.
- **Earrings/Jewelry/Body Piercing:** No excessive jewelry is allowed while in uniform (this includes large and/or dangly earrings, clunky bracelets, and long necklaces). Jewelry will be limited to wedding rings, a watch and **small** stud earrings. Earrings are only allowed in the ears, and limited to **one** in each ear during class room and clinical setting. Open gauged ears are not allowed. Gauges must be appropriately covered and not visible. ***No facial, tongue, nose ring, or brow rings, etc. will be allowed in the classroom and clinical setting.***

VIII. GRIEVANCES

Student grievances that cannot be resolved by the instructor must follow the grievance procedure as outlined in the Student Policy Handbook *The Pathfinder*.

IX. APPLIED EXPERIENCE POLICY

Students will not be excused from clinical practicum rotations or phlebotomy practice for disabilities or health reasons. Participation in the educational experience may be modified as necessary to fit their disability. Each student's case will be handled on an individual

basis. Completion of clinical hours is required for course credit and graduation with corresponding degree and/or certificate without exception.

The Medical Assisting department works with many different health care facility practicum/clinical sites to provide applied education as necessary to qualified students. In the event a site cannot participate and/or complete clinical instruction for the student, an alternative site will be assigned for completion of student clinical requirements. In the unlikely event that a student cannot be placed in a clinical experience during the desired semester, the student will receive first priority for clinical placement in the following semester.

Attachment A: Student Handbook Agreement

Medical Assisting



I have read the MA Student Handbook, have had key policies explained to me, and have had my questions answered. I understand it is my responsibility to be familiar with the policies in the MA Student Handbook, the Panola College Catalog and the online student handbook, *The Pathfinder*. **I will comply with the current MA Student Handbook as found on the MA web page as well as the Panola College Catalog and *The Pathfinder*.**

It is my understanding that this form will become part of my permanent file.

_____ **Student Name (Printed)**

_____ **Student Signature**

_____ **Date**

Panola College MA hereby reserves and retains the right to amend, alter, change, delete, or modify any of the provisions of the Student Handbook at any time and in any manner deemed to be in the best interest of Panola College. Currently enrolled students will be informed of any changes.

Attachment B: Limitations and Liabilities Release Form

Medical Assisting



I, _____, age _____, am a student in the Panola College MA Program. I am currently under the care of

_____ for the following condition/
(Name & credentials)

injury: _____.

My primary provider recommends the following limitations:

Office Stamp

(Primary Provider Signature)

(Primary Provider Printed Name)

I am requesting to be allowed to continue in the _____ Class with modifications as outlined by my instructor and participate in activities as able.

I HEREBY FREELY, KNOWINGLY, AND VOLUNTARILY ELECT TO PARTICIPATE IN ASPECTS OF THE MA PROGRAM, AS I AM ABLE. I HEREBY AGREE TO RELEASE, INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS PANOLA COLLEGE MEDICAL ASSISTING PROGRAMS, ITS FACULTY, STAFF, AGENTS, NURSING FACILITIES, TOUR FACILITIES, AND EMPLOYEES FROM ANY AND ALL LOSS, DAMAGE, CLAIM, OR LIABILITY ARISING FROM THE SAME, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO PERSONAL INJURIES SUSTAINED BY ME OR INFLICTED UPON BY ANOTHER.

I PERSONALLY ASSUME ALL RISKS OF MY VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION. _____(initials).

I HAVE READ THIS IN ITS ENTIRETY AND I ACKNOWLEDGE IT IS LEGALLY BINDING.

(Student Signature) (Date)

(Witness Name) (Witness Address)

Attachment C: Immunization Agreement

Medical Assisting



_____ I understand that due to potential occupational exposure to blood and potentially infectious materials, as well as other infectious diseases at the clinical site, I may be at risk of exposure.

_____ I understand that it is my responsibility to obtain all required immunizations prior to given due date and that I **cannot** leave class or clinical to obtain these tests.

_____ I understand that if I have **not** obtained and provided proof of all required immunizations by the given due date, I will be subject to 1 demerit the day after the due date. Furthermore, I will receive an additional demerit for each month after the given due date immunizations are not completed. I understand that I will be dismissed from the program if I earn 3 demerits in a semester.

_____ I understand that the clinical site may require additional immunizations.

_____ I understand that if I am unable to take the TB skin test, I must provide proof from my primary physician that I do not have TB or any communicable disease.

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____

Attachment D: Background Check Consent

Medical Assisting



I give Panola College permission to do a background search from the following web site in accordance to the requirements as set forth by the Health and Safety Code Chapter 250.006, prior to registering for the Medical Assisting Program.

Public Data.com – Criminal History Background

If I am married or have been married and divorced, I also understand and give Panola College permission to do a criminal background search on my maiden name as well as that of my married name. My admission to the Medical Assisting Program is ultimately determined by the findings of these three searches and those findings will be final.

Name: LAST FIRST MIDDLE

(if applicable) MAIDEN: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____

SIGNIATURE

DATE

Attachment E: Drug Screen Consent
Medical Assisting



I, _____, recognize that the use and abuse of alcohol, drugs or
(Print Name)
substances can create an unsafe learning and clinical working environment for others and
myself. When requested, I agree to provide blood, urine and/or breath sample to the drug-
testing laboratory designated by Panola College. I also permit the testing laboratory to
release the results of the drug-screening test to designated Panola College authorities. I
give permission for prescription medications to be verified with the prescribing primary
health care provider by PC authorities.

(Student Signature)

(Student ID)

(Date)

Attachment F: Medication Record

Medical Assisting



Name:	SS#	DOB:
Physician's Name:	Physician's Address	Physician's Phone #:

LIST ALL MEDICATIONS CURRENTLY TAKING: *(This includes all prescription medication herbal medications, over the counter medications, vitamins and birth control medications)*

Name of Medication	Dosage	Frequency	Reason Taken	Comments

If more room is required, use another sheet of paper.

Attachment G: Physical Examination

Medical Assisting



1. Student Name: _____ Date of Physical: _____
2. Birthday: _____ Age: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____ BP: _____
3. Pertinent Past History (Illnesses, Surgeries, And Injuries): _____

4. Chronic Illness: _____
5. Vision: R 20/____ L 20/____ Color Blind: ____ Glasses: ____ Contacts: ____
6. Hearing: R____ L____ Aid? _____
7. Check (√) the following if normal. (X) if abnormal, and comment below:

<input type="checkbox"/> Skin	<input type="checkbox"/> Lymph nodes	<input type="checkbox"/> Abdomen
<input type="checkbox"/> Orthopedic	<input type="checkbox"/> Spine	<input type="checkbox"/> Neurologic
<input type="checkbox"/> ENT	<input type="checkbox"/> Head/Neck	<input type="checkbox"/> Genitalia
<input type="checkbox"/> Lungs	<input type="checkbox"/> Heart	<input type="checkbox"/> Menses

8. Adaptations made or recommended:

9. Current Medications:

I have examined this student and have found no conditions appearing to prevent him/her from performing the duties of a MA student with the possible exception of:

Office Seal or Stamp of Provider
MUST
Be provided in this box

(Provider Signature)

(Provider Printed Name)

Attachment H: Confidentiality Agreement

Medical Assisting



I _____ have been informed of **HIPAA** and I understand that information concerning a patient's condition may **never** be discussed either inside or outside the nursing homes, and/or tour facilities; the exception is information given to the instructor that is related to patient condition and my program skills and duties.

Furthermore, patient information may **never** be released to anyone without proper authorization from the appropriate facility administration.

I understand that information concerning nursing home/tour facility business and their employees is confidential as well and will not be discussed inside or outside the nursing home/tour facility.

I understand that I will be held accountable for the confidentiality of the information to which I will have access.

I further understand that release of confidential information about a patient, employee, or the nursing home/tour facility is not only a serious HIPAA violation, and a serious breach of ethics and confidentiality, but also may involve legal proceedings, loss of privileges, and I will receive an immediate grade of **"F"** in the Medical Assisting Classes I am currently enrolled in and **will not** be allowed to proceed in the program.

Print name: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____

Attachment I: Counseling and Disciplinary Action

Medical Assisting



STUDENT: _____ **ID:** _____ **DATE:** _____

- ___ Dismissal
- ___ Attendance
- ___ Verbal Notice

- ___ Scholastic
- ___ Conduct
- ___ Performance

ABSENCE

FULL DEMERIT

- | | |
|--|--|
| ___ Unprofessional Behavior
(profanity, disrespect, etc.) | ___ Inappropriate behavior in class/clinical
setting. |
| ___ Orientation – did not attend | ___ Dress Code |
| ___ Dishonesty, cheating | ___ Leaving clinical site without permission |
| ___ Failure to notify - clinical | ___ Tobacco use in prohibited areas |
| ___ Immunizations - p/mo. after deadline | ___ Failure to file L & L Form |

VIOLATION (HALF DEMERIT)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| ___ Chronic tardiness – more than 3 | ___ Personal Hygiene |
| ___ Excess break/lunch time | ___ Insubordination |
| ___ General conduct / attitude | ___ Quitting early |
| ___ Failure to follow directions | |

Instructor Remarks/Recommendations:

Student Remarks:

Student Signature
(My signature does not necessarily reflect agreement;
it only reflects receipt of information.)

Instructor Signature

ACKN of student dispute

Date

Total: **Violations:** _____ **Demerits:** _____ **Absences:** _____