“Administrative professionals are the largest segment of the office workforce, representing more than 4.5 million workers in the United States and Canada.” (Office Pro)

By 2020, the BLS predicts employment growth for medical secretaries of about 41.3 percent between 2010 and 2020, which is much faster than the average growth for all occupations. Job prospects are good, particularly for those looking to work at physicians’ offices and surgical hospitals. (BLS, 2013)

General medical and surgical hospitals, offices of dentists, office of other types of health practitioners, including chiropractors, optometrists and mental health practitioners, and outpatient care centers also employed high numbers of medical secretaries.

Medical secretaries are administrative support personnel who provide assistance to researchers, physicians, nurses and other medical workers. Their responsibilities include scheduling patient appointments, taking medical histories, processing insurance information, transcribing dictation and answering routine correspondence. The term medical secretary and medical administrative assistant are interchangeable.

Medical secretaries differ from medical assistants in that they do not perform clinical duties, such as drawing blood, taking temperatures and collecting urine samples. They help the medical office run smoothly and efficiently, while relieving medical personnel of routine, and sometimes, complex administrative tasks.

Technology’s transformation of the workplace has placed a premium on technical competencies as well as an individual’s “people skills.”

The growth of office automation has created an increased need for individuals who are proficient not only in basic office skills, but who are also knowledgeable and proficient in such areas as word processing, computer software applications, records management, and office management. Additionally, interpersonal and communication skills—both written and oral—are extremely important and may make or break an individual’s career success in the office of today and in the future. It is important that today’s office professional adapt to and understand the total office environment.

The Office Technology program at the University of Rio Grande prepares students for the multifaceted duties and challenges found in today’s ever-evolving office environment.

The Office Technology course of study is designed to service a two-year program, Medical Office Assistant, leading to an Associate of Applied Business Degree in Office Technology or a one-year certificate in Medical Machine Transcription. Students who graduate with a degree in Office Technology may find this training to be a stepping stone toward a management position or other related fields such as office and administrative support supervisors, office managers, or human resources, training, and labor relations managers and specialists.
Medical Office Assistant

First Year

Fall
ENG 11103 Composition I*
OT 23202 Office Machines
PHT 12103 Applied Science for HRC I
OT 10403 Keyboarding I**
AHC 13302 Medical Terminology I
LA 10001 Gateway to Success

Spring
PSY 11103 General Psychology or
SOC 11103 Intro. to Sociology
AHC 10202 Standards of Patient Care
OT 11603 Keyboarding II—Medical
AHC 14302 Medical Terminology II
OT 24203 Records/Database Management
PHT 12203 Applied Science for HRC II

Second Year

Fall
ACC 10503 Gen. Accounting Fund.
AHC 20303 ICD Coding
MTH 11903 Mathematics for Nurses
OT 27302 Medical Machine Transcription
OT 28502 OT Spreadsheet Applications
PHT 11103 Pharmacology for HRC I
AHC 10302 Electronic Health Records

Spring
PHR 21403 Medical Ethics
AHC 21203 CPT Coding
TEC 23303 Office Mgmt. & Customer Relations
OT 28202 Office Practicum
OT 28603 Word Info. Proc. Applications
PHT 11203 Pharmacology for HRC II

*Placement determined by testing.

**Prerequisite for this course is OT 10003 Beginning Keyboarding. Students must be able to type at least 40 wpm for 3–5 min. with 5 or less errors using proper keyboarding techniques before they are permitted to take this course. OT 10003 Beg. Keyboarding will be offered Fall Semester for those who need it.

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