



VUMC Medical Assistant Clinical Ladder

Guidelines 2022

Benner's Levels of Practice

The ladder levels are based on “From Novice to Expert: Excellence and Power in Clinical Practice” by Patricia Benner (1984). Benner has described stages in the progression of patient care expertise that can result from clinical experience. Listed below is a brief description of each stage:

Novice/Intern

The novice/intern is defined as an entry-level MA who delivers fundamental knowledge-based care to assigned patients while developing technical competencies. The novice/intern begins to gain experience under direct or close supervision and depends on rules to guide actions.

Advanced Beginner/Competent

The advanced beginner demonstrates marginally acceptable performance and relies on basic theory and principles. Help is needed for priority setting. The competent practitioner is consciously aware of long-range goals and can engage in deliberate planning based on abstract and analytical consideration. As a result of this planning, the competent MA has a feeling of mastery and the ability to cope with contingencies and feels efficient and organized.

Proficient

The proficient MA perceives situations from a global perspective. S/he can interpret nuances in situations and recognize which aspects of the situation are most significant. This MA functions independently and efficiently and demonstrates leadership through the management of complex patients and through some involvement in unit / organization activities.

Advanced Proficient

The MA at this level has an in-depth knowledge of clinical practice achieved through 3-5 years' experience, insightful practice, and continuous learning. This MA relies on previous experience for focused analysis of problems and solutions. The MA can accommodate unplanned events and respond with speed, efficiency, and flexibility and confidence. An integrated, collaborative approach to care is evident. This MA begins to assume a leadership position within the clinical practice area and often serves as role model, preceptor, and coach.

Expert

The expert MA's perspective is intuitive, and evidence based. The MA has achieved a comprehensive knowledge base from typically 5 years or more experience. The expert MA is self-directed, flexible, and innovative in providing care and has a deep understanding of the total situation to resolve complex issues. Other characteristics include actively and positively influencing the team, fostering critical thinking in others, and forming mentoring relationships with other staff. The expert Medical Assistant participates and leads activities that improve systems and serves as a change agent to challenge him/herself and others.

Within the VUMC Medical Assistant Clinical Ladder Program, the last two stages will result in recognition and be classified as follows:

Proficient	Level II
Advanced Proficient/Expert	Level III

ADVANCEMENT PROCESS

Who is eligible? *

Regular, full, or part-time Medical Assistants

Eligibility Requirements

To participate in the clinical ladder program, the MA must meet **all** the following eligibility requirements:

1. Must be employed at Vanderbilt for one year as an MA and have an annual performance evaluation on file
2. Must have performed at the Meets Expectation on the performance evaluation in all areas of standards (no section of the eval may have a Partially or Inconsistently Meets Expectations or below)
3. Must have completed all mandatory competencies and in-services required by VUMC and department on or before the initial deadline; and
4. Must **NOT** have any documented progressive discipline on file within the rolling year of application.
5. If candidate meets all eligibility requirements as well as proficient and advanced proficient/expert requirements, they can enter the ladder at level III.

Review Process

The MA Ladder subgroup will review the ladder packets of the MAs seeking progression in the clinical ladder program. A subgroup assures congruence with professional clinical practice criteria for the levels. The subgroup makes recommendations for advancement to the Human Resources/Payroll Department. The MA is notified of the decision within 60 days of the application receipt.

Incomplete packets (missing forms, verification documents, etc.) and late packets will be denied and returned for completion.

Compensation

The MA participating in the clinical ladder program will be compensated for participation by a differential added to their base rate, and recognized with a pin as follows:

Level II	\$ 0.75
Level III	\$ 1.00

Changes in compensation will be effective the first FULL pay period after being approved by the MA Professional Ladder Subgroup.

Transfers

A MA who transfers from one specialty to another will maintain his/her present level until the time of the next application period. **Upon reapplying, it is possible that your status in the program may change (move down a level). This may be related to the time that is required to gain skills and to be considered proficient or expert in the new area.**

Program Evaluation

The MA Ladder subgroup will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the success of the program. Recommendations or feedback should be directed to any member in this group.

MA Levels of Achievement

To be considered for Advancement, the Medical Assistant must complete the following:

- Meet with Manager for a recommendation of advancement
- Be employed by Vanderbilt for one calendar year
- Up to date and completed LMS competencies, Orientation Checklists, and in good standing with the organization (No disciplinary action in the preceding 12 months)
- A minimum of 1 year of employment per progression for each ladder

Once the Medical Assistant has been approved, they must achieve a minimum of THREE selections from MAII (one per each category) to stay within the requirements of the ladder.

When the MA II moves to MA III, they must complete a minimum of FIVE selections to stay satisfactory in the ladder. (For example- Continue their minimum of three from the MA II ladder and add minimum of two from the MA III selections, again one from each category).

This criterion has been chosen to ensure this is achievable for all staff.

<u>MA II</u>	<u>MA III</u>
<p>Professionalism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Organization member • Professional Organization/ Conference Attendance • Community Involvement Project <p>Continuous Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development (minimum of 6 CEs with copy of certificate) • Clinical Skills/Mosby's-4 modules that relate to your practice • Enrolled in college courses <p>Organizational Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in competency discussions/ assessment/Competency champion • Preceptor • Infection Control Champion • Regulatory Readiness Champion • eStar Super User • Active member of an entity committee • Develop or teaches an Inservice • Participate in a Lean project 	<p>Professionalism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Recognition • Peer Review/Interviewing • Professional Organization/ Conference Presentation • Community Improvement Lead <p>Continuous Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development (minimum of 8 CEs with copy of certificate) • Clinical Skills with test - 8 modules that relate to your specific practice • Enrolled in college courses • Clinical Research <p>Organizational Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Preceptor Class Attendance • Patient Experience Champion (System Committee) • Employee Engagement Champion • Performance Improvement Project • Evidenced Based Practice • Chair/Co-Chair an entity committee • Certification Review Facilitator

EXPLANATION FOR SPECIFIC CRITERIA WITHIN THE GRID

MA II

<u>Professionalism:</u>	
Professional Organization	Membership to a clinical professional organization (healthcare related organization is accepted ie the approved five MA certifying bodies as an active member).
Professional Organization Conference Attendance	Attendance to educational events (virtual attendance is accepted certificate of attendance is required).
Community Involvement/Humanitarian Acts	All activities claimed must align with Vanderbilt's Core Values. Participates in VUMC or PCC community health event.

<u>Continuous Learning:</u>	
Professional Development (LMS/OnDemand)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Clinical Skills with test/Mosby: The MA must complete the clinical skills test. The skill should encompass continuing education in the field of practice in which you work. (ex. Manual Blood Pressure/Upper Extremity-CE) The certificate must be printed off and submitted for verification.2. Be enrolled in a healthcare related college courses to further education. Transcript or letter showing completed credit hours from school is required.<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Obtain other continuing education credits (ex. CDC). Contact hours must be awarded through an organization that is accredited as an approver of continuing education by MAs Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.
<u>Organizational Development:</u>	
Participate in Competency Discussions	The MA will participate in competency needs assessment with their Nursing Educator.
Preceptor	It is required for the MA to attend the Vanderbilt Preceptor Program: Preceptor Treasures. The MA is responsible as a Preceptor to ensure the orientation and onboarding process for the New Hire is complete. The MA must include names of

	those that were precepted and a summary of the experience to their Manager/Director.
Infection Control Champion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Become a hand hygiene observer for your local clinic or observe another clinic monthly. (i.e. SGNA Infection Control Champion-GI Area) or 2. Serve as a volunteer to the local infection control department during one of the following <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Skills fair – Work the infection control booth – 4 hours (when applicable) b. Any other infection control booth/activity or presentation c. Educate staff of clinic on Infection Prevention measures <p>*Documentation from Infection Preventionist of completed items**</p>
Regulatory Readiness Champion	<p>Be involved in the below activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance Improvement (PI) projects to keep clinic in compliance with guidelines 2. Trace your home clinic for JCR preparedness. 3. Quality Champion (i.e. Fall Champion, or quality for clinic)
eStar Super User	<p>MA's who are eStar superusers for their clinic must be able to show continued service as a superuser.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The MA must be a superuser for at least six months of the previous year 2. Attends 75% of all superuser activities/meetings 3. Skills fair – Hubble Ambulatory Tip & Tricks – 4 hours 4. Skills learned in Super User training must be incorporated in the MA's clinic. Completion of this item includes a summary of education <p>*eStar Representative/ Manager to validate completion*</p>
Active member of a VMG committee	<p>The MA will actively participate in a min of one entity committee. The MA must attend 75% of the selected committee(s) within a 12-month period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of attendance by copy of sign in sheets • And/or letter from Chair verifying attendance

Develops or teaches an Inservice	The MA will develop content and teach to their clinic peers a health-related topic for Inservice.
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EXPLANATION FOR SPECIFIC CRITERIA WITHIN THE GRID

MA III

<u>Professionalism:</u>	
Professional Recognition	The MA will be recognized by receiving an award or nomination from the health system or from a professional organization. (i.e. MA award, MA of the year award, October National MA week, Friend of Nursing nomination, Department Specific Award, Preceptor of the year in your area).
Peer Review/Interviewing	Serves as a member of a formalized team or group of employees in the department with expected responsibilities to formally interview potential new hires and/or provide feedback for employees' performance evaluations.
Professional Organization Conference Presentation	Poster or Oral presentation at a local or national conference relevant to the MA profession (virtual attendance is accepted).
Community Involvement/Humanitarian Act LEAD	The MA will serve as a LEAD for their peers in community acts of service. Examples of leading: Organizing donation drives etc. Also, for the non-paid volunteer work that is on-going with a consistent schedule where an organization, or third-party institution is relying on the committed service you provide (such as coaching, scout leader, volunteer school MA, volunteer fire fighter, clinical home volunteer, mission trips).

<u>Continuous Learning:</u>	
Professional Development (LMS/OnDemand)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clinical Skills with test/Mosby: The skill should encompass continuing education in the field of practice in which you work. (ex. Manuel Blood Pressure/Upper Extremity-CE). The certificate must be printed off and submitted for verification. 2. Be enrolled/completed in college courses. 3. Obtain other continued education credits (ex. CDC). 4. Contact hours must be awarded through an organization that is accredited as an approver

	of continuing education by MAs Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.
Clinical Research	The MA is an active participant of a project that is deemed relevant for progression in ladder related to healthcare field, workflow management, and is pre-approved by leadership.

Organizational Development:	
Advanced Preceptor Class	Attend NEPD's Advanced Preceptor Class and serve as a mentor to the preceptors across the Ambulatory setting. Along with onboarding staff the MA will assist in scheduling staff, 30, 60, 90-day evaluations and provides continued support post onboarding period.
Patient Experience & Clinical Recognition Organizational Development	Participation in patient experience activities- VMG utilizes a large amount of technology to care for our patients. (i.e. MA visual management board, monitor quarter highlights, managing quality data, workflow grid, process of imaging/uploading, help with problem-solving workflow).
Employee Engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Actively participates on a committee or serves in a department champion role (Patient Experience, Patient Safety, Employee Engagement) for a minimum of 3 months prior to the application. 2. Participation in recruitment activities. Examples of specific activities may include speaking at a school or community event about choosing clinical as a career, allowing students to job shadow through academic outreach, going with a recruiter to a recruitment event or open house, and peer interviewing. 3. Participation in retention activities. Retention is the ability to keep employees at the organization. Some examples of activities that may be related to retention are allowing MAs to shadow you in an area different from their home base, planning a social function for the department, identify causes for turnover and/or stress in your area and work with manager or group of MAs to make changes and improvements in the environment, identify growth opportunities

	for the MAs and develop ways to recognize MAs for achievements in your area.
Performance Improvement	PI project: Identifies department/clinic risks. Includes participation in resolution or active member of a focus group for resolution. QI: Participates in a quality improvement project.
Evidenced Based Practice	EBP is the basis of our professional practice as every MA must be knowledgeable about it. Participating in journal clubs is a simple way to learn and practice the assessment of EBP and clinical research. (i.e.: Research an article that is specialized to your practice and write an exemplar on how it was incorporated into your practice)
VMG Committee member LEAD	The MA will provide leadership on the selected entity committee. The MA may Chair or Co-Chair a committee or lead a subgroup to committee. Attend 75% of meetings in a 12-month period. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of attendance by copy of sign in sheets • And/or letter from Executive Sponsor verifying attendance (i.e. MA Council, VMG Educational Committee, Department/Area Committee Chair, VMG Preceptor Committee, Quality Committee)
Certification Review Facilitator	The MA will lead peers as a certification review facilitator for upcoming renewal of registration or certification.

FAQ's

1. How will I know my application has been processed?

Once you have submitted your REDCap you will receive an email confirmation regarding next steps.

2. What if I would like to challenge the ladder and apply for MA III instead of MA II?

If your leader agrees to the challenge and you meet all the requirements, you may skip a level up to April 1st, 2022, with providing all fields are present and uploaded for MA III.

3. What if I have further questions that aren't answered here?

You can find more information on the MA Website or by emailing MALadder@VUMC.org

4. How often must I reapply?

Medical Assistant's that have attained an advanced level are required to reapply every two years to maintain status.

5. What if I cannot maintain my status at my current level?

Medical Assistants who have achieved the level of MA III but chose not to or are unable to achieve certification, have the option to apply for renewal as MA II instead. If application for renewal is approved at this level, the pay adjustment will be made by area leaders.

6. What happens if a MA advances and then does not continue to perform at their advanced level?

If an MA is not performing to level, the manager will discuss the situation with the MA. The MA can choose to move into a lower level or commit to improving practice to achieved level consistently thereafter. The manager will meet with the MA to develop an action plan that is completed within 90 days. At the end of this time frame, if the MA is not performing at the desired level, the Manager, in consultation with the area Human Resources Business Partner, will determine, the appropriate level placement.

7. What is the pay increase for each level?

MA II .75

MA III 1.00