

**HOUSATONIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE
900 Lafayette Boulevard Bridgeport,
Connecticut 06604**

**OPHTHALMIC ASSISTANT PROGRAM
(NON-CLINICAL)**

APPLICANT INFORMATION

ROLLING ADMISSION: CLASS STARTS August 31st, 2020

Program Information

The two semester **Ophthalmic Assistant Program** prepares individuals to become part of the eye-care team and provide support services under the supervision of a licensed physician (ophthalmologist) specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the eye. Course work includes classroom as well as hands-on instruction in our laboratory. The emphasis will be on taking medical and ocular histories and performing a variety of ocular measurements (lensometry, refractometry, keratometry, tonometry, muscle balance screening, and perimetry.) Students completing the Ophthalmic Assisting Program, after working 1000 (500 hours when we are an accredited program or as we currently have been granted status as a program in the process of acquiring accreditation) hours under the supervision of an ophthalmologist, will be eligible to take the Joint Commission of Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (JCAHPO) Certified Ophthalmic Assistant (COA) national certification examination.

Ophthalmic assistants are employed in ophthalmology practices, hospitals, clinics and industry.

ADMISSION PROCESS

Admission to the Ophthalmic Assistant Program requires submission of a completed application, transcript(s), letter of recommendation and an essay. Applications will be reviewed until the class is full, on a rolling admissions basis by a committee consisting of the Program Director, representative from the Division of Continuing Education and Workplace Development and the program coordinator. Students must complete all admissions requirements to be considered. As the class size is limited, we recommend students submit their application as soon as possible.

Admission Requirements

The following requirements need to be submitted to Rosalee Creighton-Fuller before an applicant can be accepted into the program.

1. Complete the Ophthalmic Assistant Program Application

Application is available online at:

[http://www.housatonic.edu/images/Departments/CE/PDF/Ophthalmic Assistant_Application.pdf](http://www.housatonic.edu/images/Departments/CE/PDF/Ophthalmic_Assistant_Application.pdf).

2. Documentation of high school graduation/high school equivalency

A high school graduate should submit a transcript indicating date of graduation, diploma, or an official letter from the high school (administration or guidance counselor) indicating date of graduation.

Applicants with a high school equivalency must provide official documentation to HCC from the granting institution.

3. Transcripts of any college work

The applicant should submit copies of transcripts with the application.

4. Essay

250-500 words on why you want to be an ophthalmic assistant and two of your characteristics or experiences that would support your application.

5. Letter of Recommendation

Letter of recommendation should be from a supervisor in an ophthalmology practice, teacher, guidance counselor, or employer and address communication skills, dependability, ability to assume responsibility, attention to detail, maturity and if possible basic math skills.

6. Math and communication skills competency

We will use your evidence of high school graduation (transcript preferred) or equivalency (and college transcript if submitted) to determine if you have studied arithmetic and basic algebra. These skills are necessary for success as an ophthalmic assistant. Communication skills will be assessed from your essay and letter of recommendation. We recommend reviewing basic mathematics before starting the program.

7. If applying for a scholarship

Please see page 8. of this document and submit at time of application to the program. Scholarship applicants please show evidence of math skills.

8. Please send all information to:

Housatonic Community College
900 Lafayette Blvd.
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Attention: Rosalee Creighton-Fuller, Secretary, Math/Science Department Room C274

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Ophthalmic Assistant Program abides by the State of Connecticut and the Community College System policies on non-discrimination: <http://www.ct.edu/files/pdfs/policy-affirmativeaction.pdf>

For all questions or issues regarding Affirmative Action, contact the HCC Director of Human Resources, at (203) 332--5013, or teisenbach@housatonic.edu

INFORMATION SESSIONS

We recommend applicants attend the Ophthalmic Assistant Information Session to learn about the program. Please see details and dates at Housatonic.edu/Continuing Education and Professional Development.

APPLICANT SELECTION PROCESS

Several times during the admission cycle a committee (Ophthalmic Assistant Program Director; Director or a representative of the Department of Continuing and Professional Education; and a representative from the college) will review applications and select students for the program on a rolling admissions process.

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

The students accepted into the program will be notified of acceptance to the Ophthalmic Assistant Program by phone call and letter. When the class is filled remaining applicants will be informed and invited to apply the following year. They will also be informed of other opportunities for study at the college.

REGISTRATION

Accepted students will register for classes each semester using the Continuing Education and Workforce Development application/ registration form. Please register before the course begins. Registration form available at <http://www.housatonic.edu/continuingprofessional-education/how-to-register>.

Please also submit a copy to acruz@housatonic.edu. Students are expected to pay for the course at the same time of registration. If you have a scholarship ;please note "scholarship" on the registration form.

PLEASE BE AWARE

1. Basic competency in arithmetic, basic algebra, reading, writing and speaking standard

English is necessary for success in this program. Review and tutoring is available at the Academic Support Center/Tutoring Center 203-332-5019, Room L152

2. **Infant, Child and Adult CPR certification**

Students are required to complete CPR certification by the time they apply for the certification examination. Certificate of completion of CPR training should be brought to the Program Director/Instructor.

3. **Criminal background checks/Drug screening/Health and immunization status expectations**

Students should be aware that ophthalmology practices usually require passing a criminal background check and drug screen for employment. They will also require proof of immunization and a satisfactory health status.

4. **Progression Requirements**

A minimum grade of P must be maintained in Ophthalmic Assistant I to progress to the second semester.

5. It is expected that students will keep HCC and the program director informed of changes in address and other contact information.

Technical Standards for Ophthalmic Assistant Careers*

Functional Ability	Standard	Examples of Required Activities
Observation		
Visual	Normal or corrected visual acuity sufficient for accurate observation and performance of technician duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See objects up to 20 feet away • Read and interpret the electronic medical record and/or associated paper medical records. • Read dials on ophthalmic instruments such as, but not limited to: keratometer, phoropter, lensometer, tonometer, biomicroscope
Hearing	Normal or assisted ability sufficient for assessment of patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hear normal speaking level sounds
Communication		
Communication	Oral communication skills sufficient to communicate in English with accuracy, clarity, and efficiency with patients, their families and other members of the health care team, including non-verbal communication, such as interpretations of facial expressions, affect and body language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give verbal directions to or follows verbal directions from other members of the healthcare team and participate in health care team discussion of patient care • Elicit and record information about health history, current health state and responses to treatment from patients or family members. • Convey information to patients and others as necessary to teach, direct and counsel individuals in an accurate, effective and timely manner
Motor Function		
Gross Motor Skills	Gross motor skills sufficient to provide the full range of safe and effective care of the ophthalmic patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move within confined spaces such as a treatment room, examination room, or OR suite • Assist patients with impaired mobility with safe transfers • Administer CPR and maintain current certification
Fine Motor Skills	Fine motor skills sufficient to perform manual instrumentation as well as automated instrumentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick up and grasp small objects with fingers such as surgical instruments • Perform manual Lensometry; Refractometry; Keratometry, bio-microscopy • Perform various methods of tonometry with Bio-microscope or handheld • Perform various imaging techniques • Perform pachymetry, contact lens insertion and removal, and other precise tasks

Behavioral and Social		
Emotional/Behavioral	Emotional stability and appropriate behavior sufficient to assume responsibility/accountability for actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i Establish rapport with patients, instructors and colleagues
Professional Attitudes and Interpersonal Skills	<p>Present professional appearance and demeanor; demonstrate ability to communicate with patients, supervisors, physicians, and co-workers to achieve a positive and safe work environment</p> <p>Follow instructions and safety protocols</p> <p>Honesty and integrity above reproach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect and care for persons whose appearance, condition, beliefs and values may be in conflict with their own • Deliver patient care regardless of patient's race, ethnicity, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation or diagnosis • Conduct themselves in a composed, respectful manner in all situations and with all persons • Work with teams and workgroups • Demonstrate emotional skills to remain calm and maintain professional decorum in an emergency/stressful situation • Demonstrate prompt and safe completion of all patient care responsibilities • Exhibit ethical behaviors and exercise good judgment
Intellectual, Conceptual and Quantitative Abilities		
Cognitive/Quantitative Abilities	Reading comprehension skills and mathematical ability sufficient to understand written documents in English involving measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis and synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect subjective and objective data from patients • Accurately process information from medical records and policy and procedure manuals • Record measurements such as, but not limited to, intraocular pressure, visual acuity, pupil assessment, refractometry readings, lensometry readings, spectacle correction, keratometry results • Calculate spherical equivalent • Transpose prescriptions
Conceptual/Spatial Abilities	Conceptual/spatial ability sufficient to comprehend three-dimensional and spatial relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehend spatial relationships in order to properly perform various methods of tonometry, digital imaging techniques and other technical skills requiring contact with the eye
Physical Ability		
Physical Endurance	Physical stamina sufficient to remain continuously on task for up to a 8 hour clinical shift while standing, sitting, moving, lifting and bending to perform patient care activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk/stand for extended periods of time; position and transfer patients.

Mobility	Physical ability sufficient to move from room to room and to maneuver in small spaces; manual and finger dexterity; and hand-eye coordination to perform technician duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move around facility and in exam and treatment rooms • Perform tasks that require bimanual dexterity such as, but not limited to, contact lens insertion and removal, manual lensometry, manual keratometry, bio-microscopy
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*Adapted from Caldwell Community College Ophthalmic Medical Assistant Program

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The ophthalmic Assistant Program is a two-semester program Ophthalmic Assistant I is taught in the fall semester and Ophthalmic Assistant II is taught in the spring semester. Please see course outlines for performance objectives for each course.

OPHTHALMIC ASSITANT I

The first course in a two-semester sequence to prepare students for careers as Ophthalmic Assistants. The role and responsibilities of the ophthalmic assistant will be introduced. Students will develop entry-level knowledge and skills in office and administrative procedures patient communication and education; ethical, legal and regulatory aspects of patient care; practices essential for patient and personal safety; medical terminology; basic general and ocular anatomy and physiology ocular microbiology; ocular pharmacology; and a basic understanding of major disorders of the eye. Students will develop entry level skills in triag, history taking; examination of the eye; as well as use and maintenance of relevant clinical equipment, instruments and supplies. Learning activities will include attending lectures; active learning with case histories; participating hands-on learning activities in our clinical skills teaching laboratory; and out of class assignments. Mondays 6:00pm-9:30pm

OPHTHALMIC ASSISTANT II

This course is a continuation of the development of the knowledge and skills acquired in Ophthalmic Assisting 1. Skills relevant to assisting an ophthalmologist in the diagnosis and care of patients will be taught in context of the major disorders of the eye. Students will enhance their patient care, education, communication and use of equipment as they learn more details about disorders of the eye. Learning activities will include attending lectures; active learning with case histories; participating i hands-on learning activities in our clinical skills teaching laboratory; and out of class assignments. Monday 6:00pm-9:30pm

ESTIMATED OPHTHALMIC ASSISTANT PROGRAM COSTS

Tuition*	\$1,900 program tuition	\$950 for each semester
Criminal Background Check, Drug Screen, Immunization Tracker	Not required for this non-clinical program but often required for employment	
Certificate of Completion	No charge	
Certification exam after completion of 500 clinical hours under the supervision of an ophthalmologist**	\$300.00 covered by the tuition (paid to JCAHPO)	When both semesters of the program and the 500 hours of clinical experience are completed.
Textbooks	Covered by tuition	
Travel	Varies	Students are responsible for travel to and from HCC.

* May be subject to change without notice as determined by the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities.

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Limited scholarships are available. The Admission Committee will determine scholarship eligibility. Please complete and submit the scholarship application at the time of application. The application is on our website:

http://www.housatonic.edu/images/Departments/CE/PDF/HCC_Ophthalmic_Scholarship_2019.pdf

Subject to change without notice as determined by JCAHPO

SCHOLARSHIPS

I have read and understand the contents of this Student Information for Application to the Ophthalmic Assistant Program document. Please sign and submit a copy of this page with your application.

1. I realize that criminal background checks, drug screening and health status and immunization requirements are necessary for employment in many medical practices.
2. I understand that in addition to completion of Ophthalmic Assistant I and Ophthalmic Assistant II courses, 500 hours of work experience under the supervision of an ophthalmologist are needed to be eligible to take the certification examination.

3. CPR certification is required to become a Certified Ophthalmic Assistant.

Print Name

Signature

Date

For additional information, please contact Rosalee Creighton-Fuller rcreighton-fuller@housatonic.edu

The college reserves the right to make changes to this document



Ophthalmic Career

HCC's Ophthalmic Assistant coursework is the first step towards a rewarding career.

HCC Ophthalmic Assistant I
&
HCC Ophthalmic Assistant II



500 hours Ophthalmic Assisting Workforce Experience*
(can be concurrent with coursework)
and
Take and Pass Certification Exam



Certified Ophthalmic Assistant (COA)**
Entry/COA Level = \$42,500 annual salary
Levels of certification after additional learning, work experience and certification exams.
Intermediate/COT Level = \$52,500 annual salary
Advanced/COMT Level = \$60,200 annual salary

* Employment for completion of work experience is the responsibility of the student.

** Source: Association of Technical Personnel in Ophthalmology



Continuing & Professional Education

ABOUT OPHTHALMIC ASSISTING

Working under the supervision of an ophthalmologist, ophthalmic assistants may take patient histories; provide patient support services such as scheduling and patient education; administer tests and evaluations; take eye measurements; maintain instruments and perform a variety of clinical tasks. While most ophthalmic assistants work in ophthalmology practices, jobs are also available in clinics, hospitals, universities and, industry. Ophthalmic assistant positions may be full-time or part-time.

The Ophthalmic Assisting coursework at HCC prepares students to:

- Develop specialized knowledge and skills necessary for a career as an Ophthalmic assistant
- Become part of the eye-care team,
- Assist doctors who specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the eye (ophthalmologists).

Comprehensive instruction taught by Scott Spector, M.D., Founder and Medical Director of Spector Eye Care and New Vision Cataract and Laser Center in Connecticut.



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HCC is an Achieving the Dream Leader College, ranked by the Aspen Institute among nation's top 150 community colleges for 2017



communication and education; ethical, legal and regulatory aspects of patient care; practices essential for patient and personal safety; medical terminology; basic general and ocular anatomy and physiology; ocular microbiology; ocular pharmacology; and introduction to major disorders of the eye. Students will develop entry-level skills in triage; history taking; examination of the eye; as well as use and maintenance of relevant clinical equipment, instruments and supplies. Learning activities will include attending lectures; active learning with case histories; participating in hands-on learning; participating with hands-on learning in our clinical teaching laboratory; and out-of-class assignments.

Ophthalmic Assistant II

Building upon knowledge acquired in Ophthalmic Assistant I, skills relevant to assist an ophthalmologist in the diagnosis and care of patients will be taught in context of the major disorders of the eye. Students will enhance their patient care, education, communication and use of equipment as they learn

more details about disorders of the eye. Learning activities will include attending lectures; active learning with case histories; participating in hands on learning; participating with hands-on learning in our clinical teaching laboratory; and out-of- class assignments.

Are you?

1. Currently working as an Ophthalmic Assistant?

HCC's courses will help you gain the reasoning and theory behind what you do. The coursework will prepare you for the certification exam, and while enrolled, current work experience can be credited towards the 500 hours needed to sit for the certification exam.

2. A graduate of a health care track in high school or college?

Your medical, legal and ethical knowledge will be of value in this program.

3. Looking for a career but have no training in healthcare or higher education? Or, searching for a job that increases your income and quality of life?

The program's coursework will allow you to achieve in-depth knowledge in pursuit of a career specializing in working as an assistant in an ophthalmology practice. As an HCC student, you will have access to our Career Resources for resume writing, improving interviewing skills and job search assistance.

Program Details

This program is a one-year program, consisting of two consecutive courses. Each course meets one evening per week from 6:00pm - 9:30pm. To take the exam, students must have completed the courses and 500 hours of workforce experience under the supervision of an Ophthalmologist. Students are expected to be paid by the practice for working and learning during this period.

Ophthalmic Assistant I

In this first course, the roles and responsibilities of the ophthalmic assistant will be introduced. Students will develop entry-level knowledge and skills in office and administrative procedures; patient

Application Process & Requirements

Applicants should meet these requirements before applying:

- High school diploma or GED
- Express an interest in Health and Sciences
- Good fine-motor skills
- Desire to help people

For details on the application process, and to apply, visit:

www.Housatonic.edu/OA

Scholarship funds are available.

The program is in the process of applying for accreditation by International Council of Accreditation (ICA).

“This was the best education I’ve ever received. I’ve gained so many skills that will benefit my career and help many patients with their needs. After updating my resume, two companies found me and were interested in me; I was on the verge of tears. I’m so confident and knowledgeable after learning from Dr. Spector.”

– Jennifer Freischlag, student

“I was amazed that HCC built the COA clinical room, and I’m thankful for the amazing opportunities I now have. My Professor Dr. Scott Spector showed me the career I can have beginning with this program, and even further.”

