

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

**NON-CLINICAL OPHTHALMIC ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

**APPLICANT INFORMATION**

ROLLING ADMISSION: CLASS STARTS SEPTEMBER 9, 2019

**Program Information**

The two semester **Non-Clinical 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 including 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 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.

**8. Please send all information to:**

Housatonic Community College

900 Lafayette Blvd.

Bridgeport, CT 06604

Attention: Rosalee Creighton-Fuller, Math/Science Department Secretary Room L274

### **Non-Discrimination Statement**

The Non-Clinical 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-affirmative-action.pdf>

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

### **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/continuing-professional-education/how-to-register>. Please also submit a copy to [acruz@housatonic.edu](mailto:acruz@housatonic.edu). Students are expected to pay for the course at the 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
<b>Observation</b>		
Visual	Normal or corrected visual acuity sufficient for accurate observation and performance of technician duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See objects up to 20 feet away</li> <li>• Read and interpret the electronic medical record and/or associated paper medical records.</li> <li>• Read dials on ophthalmic instruments such as, but not limited to: keratometer, phoropter, lensometer, tonometer, biomicroscope</li> </ul>
Hearing	Normal or assisted ability sufficient for assessment of patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hear normal speaking level sounds</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>		
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"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Elicit and record information about health history, current health state and responses to treatment from patients or family members.</li> <li>• Convey information to patients and others as necessary to teach, direct and counsel individuals in an accurate, effective and timely manner</li> </ul>
<b>Motor Function</b>		
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"> <li>• Move within confined spaces such as a treatment room, examination room, or OR suite</li> <li>• Assist patients with impaired mobility with safe transfers</li> <li>• Administer CPR and maintain current certification</li> </ul>
Fine Motor Skills	Fine motor skills sufficient to perform manual instrumentation as well as automated instrumentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick up and grasp small objects with fingers such as surgical instruments</li> <li>• Perform manual Lensometry; Refractometry; Keratometry, bio-microscopy</li> <li>• Perform various methods of tonometry with Bio-microscope or handheld</li> <li>• Perform various imaging techniques</li> <li>• Perform pachymetry, contact lens insertion and removal, and other precise tasks</li> </ul>
<b>Behavioral and Social</b>		

Emotional/Behavioral	Emotional stability and appropriate behavior sufficient to assume responsibility/accountability for actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish rapport with patients, instructors and colleagues</li> </ul>
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"> <li>Respect and care for persons whose appearance, condition, beliefs and values may be in conflict with their own</li> <li>Deliver patient care regardless of patient's race, ethnicity, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation or diagnosis</li> <li>Conduct themselves in a composed, respectful manner in all situations and with all persons</li> <li>Work with teams and workgroups</li> <li>Demonstrate emotional skills to remain calm and maintain professional decorum in an emergency/stressful situation</li> <li>Demonstrate prompt and safe completion of all patient care responsibilities</li> <li>Exhibit ethical behaviors and exercise good judgment</li> </ul>
<b>Intellectual, Conceptual and Quantitative Abilities</b>		
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"> <li>Collect subjective and objective data from patients</li> <li>Accurately process information from medical records and policy and procedure manuals</li> <li>Record measurements such as, but not limited to, intraocular pressure, visual acuity, pupil assessment, refractometry readings, lensometry readings, spectacle correction, keratometry results</li> <li>Calculate spherical equivalent</li> <li>Transpose prescriptions</li> </ul>
Conceptual/Spatial Abilities	Conceptual/spatial ability sufficient to comprehend three-dimensional and spatial relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehend spatial relationships in order to properly perform various methods of tonometry, digital imaging techniques and other technical skills requiring contact with the eye</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Ability</b>		
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"> <li>Walk/stand for extended periods of time; position and transfer patients.</li> </ul>

<p>Mobility</p>	<p>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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move around facility and in exam and treatment rooms</li> <li>• Perform tasks that require bimanual dexterity such as, but not limited to, contact lens insertion and removal, manual lensometry, manual keratometry, bio-microscopy</li> </ul>
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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 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 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 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 activities in our clinical skills teaching laboratory; and out of class assignments. Mondays 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.

\*\*Subject to change without notice as determined by JCAHPO

### **SCHOLARSHIPS**

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



**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@housatonic.edu](mailto:rcreighton@housatonic.edu)

The college reserves the right to make changes to this document.