Health Career Job Descriptions

**Art Therapist:** Utilizes art media, images, and the creative art process to foster self-awareness, develop social skills, encourage problem solving, reduce anxiety, and increase self-esteem.

**Athletic Trainer:** Assists the physically active to avoid injuries associated with sports by managing, recognizing, treating, rehabilitating, and minimizing injuries.

**Audiologist:** Studies normal and impaired hearing. Prevents hearing loss when possible; identifies and assesses hearing problems; and rehabilites persons with hearing impairment.

**Biomedical Engineer:** Applies engineering techniques to solve medical problems. Designs patient care equipment such as artificial kidneys, cardiac pacemakers, laser surgery devices.

**Biomedical Equipment Technician:** Adapts, operates maintains medical instruments/equipment used in patient monitoring, clinical laboratories, radiology, and other high-tech hospital departments.

**Biostatistician:** Applies mathematics and statistics to the collection, analysis, and reporting of health-related information to solve health problems.

**Cardiographic Technician:** Completes rhythm and 12 lead EKG, Holter monitoring, stress testing and telemetry surveillance to assist physicians in the diagnosis and monitoring of heart disease.

**Cardiovascular Technologist:** Performs diagnostic and therapeutic exams of the blood vessels and heart. Assists with cardiac catheterization, ultrasound, electrocardiogram, and other examinations.

**Clinical Laboratory Technician:** Implements less complex tests and laboratory procedures that provide data for use in the detection, diagnosis and treatment of diseases.

**Clinical Laboratory Scientist:** Deals with the analysis of specimens that are critical to the diagnosis and treatment of disease.

**Dental Assistant:** Prepares patients for dental exams, takes and develops x-rays, sterilizes equipment, maintains patient records, and work directly with dentist during dental procedures.

**Dental Hygienist:** Provides oral health care to patients under a dentist’s supervision, including cleaning teeth, oral assessments, taking x-rays, and providing patient education.

**Dental Laboratory Technician:** Makes and repairs orthodontic devices, dentures, inlays, crown, and other dental restoration devices using plastic, wax, and metal.

**Dentist:** Treats ailments and abnormalities affecting teeth, gums, tongue, lips, and jaws. Fills cavities, straightens teeth, repairs dental damage, extracts teeth, and prescribes dentures for patients.

**Dietician/Nutritionist:** Teaches/counsels about basic nutrition and diet modifications that can prevent or correct health problems. May plan/supervise meal preparations for health care facilities.

**Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic:** Responds to medical emergencies in the field and provides immediate care to the critically ill or injured.

**Environmental Health Specialist:** Detects, identifies, and develops systems to control or eliminate accident-producing or hazardous conditions. Monitors effectiveness on workers’ health.

**Epidemiologist:** Uses statistics, field investigations, and laboratory techniques to identify patterns of disease in a group of people and reports the results to prevent or control the spread of disease.
**Equine Assisted Psychotherapist:** Utilizes an effective therapeutic approach in which horses are used as a tool for emotional growth and learning.

**Exercise Physiologist:** Delivers treatment services concerned with improvement and maintenance of health and fitness, rehabilitation of heart disease, other chronic diseases, and disabilities.

**Gerontologist:** Studies the physical, mental, and social changes in people as they age. Examines the changes in society and applies this knowledge to policies/programs.

**Health Care Administrator:** Can be specialist managing a department such as finances, human resources, medical staff relations or can be generalist managing an entire facility or health system.

**Health Educator:** Plans, implements, and evaluates the effects of educational programs for the public designed to promote good health and prevent disease.

**Health Information Administrator:** Develops and manages information systems for recording, storage, and retrieval of large amounts of medical data in both paper and electronic forms.

**Health Information Technician:** Prepares, analyzes, stores and retrieves medical information needed by the patient, hospital, physician, insurance, registries, or other health agencies.

**Health Sciences Librarian:** Assists health professionals, medical researchers, students, and patients by finding the information for patient care, education, research and administration.

**Horticultural Therapist:** Conducts assessments and develops treatment plans utilizing gardening skills as therapy to improve patient disability, injury, and illness.

**Human Services Worker:** Provides general health and assistive services to clients in a variety of social, education, community and health care settings.

**Massage Therapist:** Administers therapeutic massage to reduce stress, complement athletic performance, lower blood pressure, improve circulation, emotional, and mental well-being.

**Medical Admissions Clerk:** Arranges the registration, admission, and discharge of patients at medical facilities, thus ensuring proper documentation of patient activities.

**Medical Assistant:** Assists physicians by performing a variety of clinical and administrative duties. The range of their duties depends on the size of the physician’s practice.

**Medical Coder:** Assigns codes to each symptom, diagnosis, disease and procedure that appears on a patient’s record for federal regulations, insurance reimbursement, and health-planning analysis.

**Medical Secretary:** Performs a variety of administrative duties to keep a medical office operating efficiently for patient and physician.

**Medical Transcriptionist:** Transcribes dictation by physicians and other health care professionals. The approved dictated reports become a part of the patient’s permanent file.

**Music Therapist:** Uses music to address physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs of individuals of all ages.

**Nuclear Medical Technologist:** Administers small amounts of radiopharmaceuticals to patients under a physician’s supervision, to monitor structure and function of a specific organ.
**Nurse Anesthetist:** Dispenses anesthesia in all types of surgical cases, applying all the accepted anesthetic techniques – general, regional, local or sedation.

**Nurse, Clinical Specialist:** Provides direct care to patients, teaches in a variety of health care settings, or works as a researcher, consultant, case manger or nurse leader/administrator.

**Nurse, Licensed Practical Nurse:** Gives basic bedside care and performs a variety of other nursing duties under supervision of physician or registered nurse.

**Nurse-Midwife:** Provides pre-conception, maternity, and post-partum care for women at low risk for complications. May also provide “well-woman” care, which includes gynecological services.

**Nurse Practitioner:** Takes medical histories, performs physical examinations, orders appropriate tests, diagnoses, and prescribes medications and treatment for health problems.

**Nurse, Registered:** Provides care, treatment, counseling, and health education to ill or injured people. Educates individuals and families to promote health, and prevent injury and illness.

**Nursing Assistant:** Gives personal care to people of all ages under nursing supervision in various types of health care settings.

**Occupational Therapist:** Evaluates disabled patients and develops appropriate adaptive equipment/devices to develop, recover, or maintain activities of daily living and work skills.

**Occupational Therapy Assistant:** Assists the occupational therapist with treatment programs to help patients develop, recover or maintain activities of daily living.

**Pharmacist:** Measures, inspects, prepares and distributes medications used to treat patients. Maintains records and reports required in the preparing, dispensing and storing of medications.

**Pharmacy Technician:** Assists pharmacists with technical tasks such as filling prescriptions and other dispensing duties.

**Phlebotomist:** Draws blood samples from patients using accurate, efficient, and minimally painful techniques.

**Physical Therapist:** Treats patients by administering procedures such as exercise, heat, electrical stimulation, massage to relieve pain and help regain as much use of their muscles as possible.

**Physical Therapist Assistant:** Teaches patients recovery exercises and implements treatment programs designed by the physical therapist.

**Physician Assistant:** Works directly with physicians to obtain medical histories and physicals. The scope of practice corresponds to the supervising physician’s practice.

**Physician, DO and MD:** Performs medical examinations, diagnoses illnesses, prescribes medications, and completes various procedures designed to help people maintain or regain health.

**Psychologist:** Focuses on learning how humans think, act, and feel; and works to improve how human react with their environment.

**Radiologic Technologist:** Takes x-ray images for the physician to use in the diagnosis of disease or injury.
Recreation Therapist: Evaluates, establishes and coordinates therapeutic recreation for inpatients and outpatients to meet their physical, social and emotional needs.

Respiratory Therapist: Works under the supervision of a physician and plays a key role in the evaluation, treatment, and monitoring of patients with respiratory and cardiovascular disorders.

Social Worker: Helps patients and their families deal with problems related to physical, mental, or emotional illness and disability.

Sonographer: Uses high-frequency sound waves to create body images that show the shape/composition of body tissues to assist doctors in diagnosing disease or injury or checking a fetus.

Speech-Language Pathologist: Specializes in the assessment, treatment and prevention of various communication disorders as well as problems that make eating and swallowing difficult.

Speech-Language Pathologist Assistant: Conducts language screenings in the public schools following established protocols under the supervision of a speech-language pathologist.

Surgical Technologist: Works as a member of the surgical team to prepare the operating room for surgery, assists during surgery, and performs the proper post-operative procedures.

For additional information, see Health Careers Resource Guide at www.wku.edu/scahec
Turn Your Interest or Personality into a Health Career

Students of many personalities and interactive types have aptitudes for specific health care careers. For more information on the health career, see www.wku.edu/scahec

**Hyper-verbal Henry/Henrietta: (Talks very much)**
Social Worker, Counselor, Psychologist, Physicians Assistant, Radiologic Technologist, Athletic Trainer, Speech-Language Pathologist

**Larry the Lab Rat: (Enjoys science labs)**
Pharmacist, Dietician, Clinical Laboratory Scientist, Medical Illustrator

**Mary Macgiver: (Creative problem-solver)**
Occupational Therapist, Medical Illustrator, Clinical Laboratory Scientist

**Ira Einstein: (Intellectually gifted)**
Sonographer, Health Sciences Librarian, Dietician, Health Care Administrator

**Carl Cares A Lot: (Displays caring)**
Phlebotomist, Doctor of Medicine, Nurse-Midwife, Nurse Practitioner, Nursing Assistant, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Human Services Worker

**Twenty Questions Tommy: (Inquisitive)**
Counselor, Human Services Worker, Social Worker, Clinical Nurse Specialist

**Silent Susan: (Shy, withdrawn)**
Health Information Technician, Health Sciences Librarian, Clinical Laboratory Scientist, Medical Transcriptionist

**Albert Ants-in-the-Pants: (Very active body movements)**
Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic, Massage Therapist

**Coordinated Casey: (Excellent physical dexterity)**
Dental Assistant, Dental Hygienist, Dentist, Phlebotomist, Doctor of Osteopathy

**Detail-Oriented Daniel: (Focuses on specifics)**
Health Information Technician, Cardiovascular Technologist, Dietician, Medical Illustrator, Cytotechnologist

**Stress-Free Sylvia: (Easy-going)**
Clinical Laboratory Technician, Perfusionist, Emergency Medical Technician, Registered Nurse, Cardiovascular Technologist, Surgical Technician

**Carmen Collaborative: (Works well with others)**
Radiologic Technologist, Dietetic Technician, Athletic Trainer, Surgical Technologist

**Organized Olivia: (Organized)**
Audiologist, Nuclear Medicine Technologist, Medical Assistant, Health Information Administrator

**Precise Patrick: (Precision-based)**
Medical Coder, Medical Secretary, Cytotechnologist, Medical Assistant, Medical Transcriptionist

**Independent Ida: (Autonomous, meets own needs)**
Sonographer, Clinical Laboratory Scientist, Dietician

**Mechanically Minded Mike: (Able to fix mechanical things)**
Radiologic Technologist, Nuclear Medicine Technologist, Biomedical Engineer, Biomedical Equipment Technician

**Lester Leadership: (Leadership skills)**
Dentist, Health Care Administrator, Doctor of Medicine

**Easy Grossed-Out-Gretchen: (Unable to deal with Blood/Body Fluids)**
Medical Secretary, Health Information Technician, Medical Transcriptionist

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Students of many hobbies and interests have aptitudes for specific health care careers. For more information on the health career, see [www.wku.edu/scahec](http://www.wku.edu/scahec)

**Art**
Medical Illustrator, Occupational Therapist, Art Therapist

**Business/Finance**
Health Administrator, Accountant

**Consumer and Family Sciences**
Dietician

**Electronics**
Computer Programmer, Biomedical Engineer, Biomedical Equipment Technician

**English/Journalism**
Health Educator, Medical Librarian, Public Relations Coordinator

**Foreign Language**
Medical Librarian, Translator

**Industrial Arts**
Biomedical Engineer, Biomedical Equipment Technician, Orthotist, Prosthetist, Orthotic/prosthetic Technician

**Mathematics**
Epidemiologist, Biostatistician

**Model Making**
Dental Laboratory Technician, Orthotist, Prosthetist, Orthotic/prosthetic Technician

**Music**
Music Therapy

**Photography**
Biomedical Research Photographer, Public Relations, Medical Illustrator

**Physical Education**
Athletic Trainer, Exercise Physiologist, Recreational Therapist

**Social Studies**
Health Educator, Psychologist, Social Worker

**Science**
Biologist, Chemist, Physicist, Physician, Dentist, Pathologist, Cytotechnologist, Pharmacist, Biomedical Engineer, Medical Researcher, Food and Drug Protection

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**Thanks to**
North Central KY Area Health Education Center and Southwest Georgia Area Health Education Center

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Deciding on a Health Career

Why should I consider a health care profession?
In the Bureau of Labor Statistics Career Guide to Industries, “8 out of 20 occupations projected to grow the fastest from 2004 to 2014 are in health care. More new wage and salary jobs - about 19 percent, or 3.6 million – created between 2004 and 2014 will be in health care than in any other industry.” Health care occupations have grown rapidly in the past and will continue to do so in the coming period. This growth is mainly due to several factors, such as aging populations that require more health care, wealthier populations that can afford better health care, and advances in medical technology that increase the demand for health care professionals.

I don’t like the sight of blood; is there a health career for me?
Yes. As a matter of fact, many health careers never come into contact with blood and some don’t even have direct contact with patients. Medical illustrators, health information technicians, health sciences librarians, health care administrators, medical insurance coding, medical records, and biomedical engineers are examples.

Do all health-related careers require a college degree?
No. Educational requirements vary according to profession and an employer’s needs. Some health careers require a high school diploma and on-the-job training. Other health careers may require a certificate or diploma which would mean 3 months to 1 year of training.

What kind of classes should I take while I’m in high school?
Classes such as chemistry, physics, mathematics, and biology will help prepare you for your college curriculum. They will give you a head start in your particular field of study.

Key point is to graduate! Many health careers do not require college but do require a high school diploma.

How much money do health care workers make?
Salaries vary greatly, depending on the education required, length of service, experience and on the location of your employers. Available salary information for careers is included in the folder.

I can’t afford to pay for education or training. Is financial aid available?
Many sources of financial aid are available to potential students. Colleges and universities award scholarships and grants as well as offering other assistance programs.

Also remember that health care is field that you can start an on-the job training position, earn enough money for more education, and then move to the next position.

Is it possible to gain experience or “try-out” a career, before I decide to pursue one?
Volunteering for health-related institutions or organizations is an excellent way to explore a range of health careers. Contact local area hospitals, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, health departments or pharmacies, and ask to become a volunteer. In addition to volunteering, some professionals will allow you to “shadow” for a specified period of time.

How can I get more information on specific careers?
Review the job descriptions in South Central KY AHEC Health Career Resource Guide for addresses, phone numbers and web sites of organizations and associations. See www.wku.edu/scahec

What is the significance of accreditation?
Accreditation is required for some financial aid programs. Accreditation is often required to obtain certification, registration or licensure as well as advanced training. You may be limited in what you can do after graduation if your program is not accredited.

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Salary Comparison of Health Careers

**Average starting Kentucky salary at entry level training in Kentucky**
Salary can be based on location, type, and size of practice; schedule; and other benefits offered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary Range</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Starting Salary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0 - $25,000</td>
<td>Cardiographic Technician</td>
<td>$21,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dental Assistant</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dental Laboratory Technician</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dietetic Technician</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emergency Medical Technician EMT-B</td>
<td>$23,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Health Information Technician EMT-B</td>
<td>$23,500</td>
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<td>Human Services Worker</td>
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<td>Massage Therapist</td>
<td>$16,600</td>
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<td>Medical Admissions Clerk</td>
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<td>Medical Assistant</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sonographer</td>
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<td>$25,001 - $50,000</td>
<td>Art Therapist</td>
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<td>Athletic Trainer</td>
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<td>Biomedical Engineer</td>
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<td>Clinical Laboratory Scientist</td>
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<td>Dental Hygienist</td>
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<td>Health Care Administrator</td>
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<td>$50,001 - $75,000</td>
<td>Clinical Nurse Specialist</td>
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<td>Nurse-Midwife</td>
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<td>Nurse Practitioner</td>
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<td>Physical Therapist</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Physician Assistant</td>
<td>$65,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>$75,001 - $100,000</td>
<td>Dentist</td>
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<td>Nurse Anesthetist</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td>$78,000</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Physician (DO and MD)</td>
<td>$110,000</td>
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Career - Entry Level
(Training available in Kentucky)

Emergency Medical Technician – Basic
Human Services Worker
Massage Therapist
Medical Admissions Clerk
Medical Coder
Medical Secretary
Nursing Assistant
Pharmacy Technician
Phlebotomist

For additional information, see Health Careers Resource Guide at www.wku.edu/scahec

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Diplomas | 1 YEAR

Career – Entry Level

(Training available in Kentucky)

Biomedical Equipment Technician
Cardiographic Technician
Dental Assistant
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)
Medical Assistant
Medical Transcriptionist
Sonographer
Surgical Technologist

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Assistants | 2 YEARS

Career – Entry Level
(Training available in Kentucky)

Respiratory Therapist
Cardiovascular Technologist
Clinical Laboratory Technician
Dental Hygienist
Dental Laboratory Technician
Gerontologist
Health Information Technician
Nuclear Medicine Technologist
Occupational Therapy Assistant
Physical Therapist Assistant
Radiologic Technologist
Registered Nurse (RN)

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Bachelors | 4 YEARS

Career - Entry Level
(Training available in Kentucky)

Athletic Trainer
Clinical Laboratory Scientist
Dietician
Environmental Health Specialist
Equine Assisted Psychotherapist
Exercise Physiologist
Health Care Administrator
Health Educator
Health Information Administrator
Horticultural Therapist
Music Therapist
Recreational Therapist
Social Worker
Speech-Language Pathology Assistant

For additional information,
see Health Careers Resource Guide at www.wku.edu/scahec

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Masters | 6 YEARS

Career - Entry Level
(Training available in Kentucky)

Art Therapist
Biomedical Engineer
Biostatistician
Clinical Nurse Specialist
Epidemiologist
Health Sciences Librarian
Nurse Anesthetist
Nurse-Midwife
Nurse Practitioner
Nutritionist
Occupational Therapist
Physician Assistant
Speech-Language Pathologist

For additional information,
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Doctorate | 8 YEARS +

Career - Entry Level
(Training available in Kentucky)

Audiologist
Dentist
Pharmacist
Physician (DO or MD)
Physical Therapist
Psychologist

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