RMA Exam Preparation Guide: The Shortest Reliable Route to Passing

The RMA exam tests whether you can work safely across clinical, laboratory, and office duties. This plan prioritizes weighted content, builds speed, and removes recurring errors. You do not need to study every topic equally.

1. RMA Exam Format, Scoring, and Retakes

The RMA exam is computer-based. It contains **200 multiple-choice questions** with a **3-hour time limit** at an authorized testing center. The published passing mark is **70%**, shown on your score report as a scaled score of 70.

The score breaks down as follows:

- **Clinical Procedures:** 46%
- **Clinical Phlebotomy:** 23%
- **Administrative Medical Assisting:** 24%
- **Law and Ethics:** 7%

If you fail, use your score report to identify weak domains. You must wait **60 days** before retesting, and AMT permits no more than **three attempts in a 12-month period**.

2. What Each Knowledge Area Requires

Clinical Procedures — 46%

You must prepare rooms, use infection-control procedures, obtain vital signs, assist examinations and treatments, collect specimens, and support medication safety. An exam question might ask you to select the correct protective equipment or sequence for setting up a sterile procedure.

Clinical Phlebotomy — 23%

You must draw blood, select and label tubes, transport specimens, and manage complications. A typical question asks you to apply the **order of draw**, *meaning the sequence in which blood tubes are collected*.

Administrative Medical Assisting — 24%

You must handle scheduling, records, insurance, billing, and patient communication. One question might ask you to distinguish **Current Procedural Terminology (CPT)**, *which identifies procedures*, from **ICD-10-CM**, *which identifies diagnoses*.

Law and Ethics — 7%

You must apply consent, confidentiality, professional boundaries, and workplace-safety rules. An example is deciding whether a patient's chart may be released to a relative without proper authorization.

3. Traps That Quietly Cost Points

- **Studying law first because it feels easier.** It carries only 7%; your time produces more value in clinical procedures.
- **Confusing clean and sterile technique.** That mistake can undermine several infection-control answers.
- **Memorizing tube colors only.** Phlebotomy also tests labeling, collection sequence, and complications.
- **Practising without a timer.** At 3 hours for 200 questions, you average only **54 seconds per question**.
- **Repeating missed questions without reading the explanations.** The explanation is where you prevent the same error.

4. A Full-Time-Worker Study Runbook

I would use **8–10 hours a week for 8–10 weeks** as a working target. Adjust after your first diagnostic.

1. **Check:** Take 50 timed, mixed questions. Identify your two weakest domains.

2. **Fix:** Spend Weeks 1–4 on clinical procedures. Learn each workflow, then complete 20–30 related questions.
3. **Fix:** Use Week 5 for phlebotomy. Drill tube sequence, labeling, and complications.
4. **Fix:** Use Week 6 for administration and law. Build a one-page summary of coding, privacy, and consent rules.
5. **Verify:** In Weeks 7–8, complete mixed timed sets. Keep an error log recording the wrong answer, correct rule, and a next-day retest.

5. The Last 48 Hours: Revise, Skip, Verify

- Revise clinical workflows, infection control, phlebotomy order of draw, and your error log.
- Refresh coding differences, privacy, consent, and the rules for assisting versus performing procedures.
- Complete one timed mixed set, then stop.
- Skip new chapters, all-nighters, and last-minute cramming. Sleep protects recall.

6. Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need a medical assistant course first?

Usually, unless you meet an AMT alternate route through qualifying work experience or military training. Confirm eligibility before paying.

Can I take the exam at home?

The exam is taken at an authorized testing center. Arrange identification, travel, and approved accommodations in advance.

What happens if I fail?

Review the domain report, wait 60 days, and retest. You may attempt the exam no more than three times in 12 months.

What practice score should I target?

Aim for **80–85% on timed mixed sets**. This is a preparation target, not the official passing mark.

Will certification help with medical assistant jobs?

Yes. It strengthens your résumé and satisfies many employer requirements, although local credentials still matter.

How long should I study?

Eight to ten weeks is a sensible starting plan. Shorten or extend it according to your diagnostic results.

Conclusion

Book your eligibility check, protect eight weekly study hours, and begin with a diagnostic set. That sequence gives you the best chance of passing the RMA exam and earning medical assistant certification.