

2021

**2018 ASSOCIATE DEGREE  
HEALTH INFORMATION  
MANAGEMENT ACCREDITATION  
STANDARDS**

CAHIIM

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## **Introduction**

The Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM) is an accrediting organization which has independent authority in all actions pertaining to accreditation of educational programs in health informatics and health information management. CAHIIM is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

CAHIIM is located at 200 East Randolph Street, Suite 5100, Chicago, Illinois, 60601, and on the web at [cahiim.org](http://cahiim.org).

## **Public Interest**

CAHIIM serves the public interest by operating in a consistent manner with all applicable ethical, business and accreditation best practices. Accreditation is a voluntary, self-regulatory process by which nongovernmental associations recognize educational programs found to meet or exceed standards for educational quality. Accreditation also assists in the further improvement of these educational programs as related to resources invested, processes followed, and outcomes achieved.

CAHIIM and its sponsoring organizations cooperate to establish, maintain, and promote appropriate standards of quality for postsecondary educational programs in health informatics and health information management, providing competent, skilled professionals to the healthcare industry.

## **CAHIIM Mission**

Provide innovative leadership that drives enhanced workforce competence by ensuring educational excellence.

## **CAHIIM Vision**

A new era in innovation and educational excellence that supports public trust and workforce competence.

## **Definition of Health Information Management (HIM)**

CAHIIM defines the discipline of health information management (HIM) as the practice of acquiring, analyzing, and protecting digital and traditional medical information vital to providing quality patient care, a combination of business, science, and information technology.

Students in the HIM discipline are expected to have working knowledge in six major domains: (1) data structure, content and information governance, (2) information protection: access, use, disclosure, privacy and security, (3) informatics, analytics and data use, (4) revenue cycle management, (5) health law and compliance, and (6) organizational management and leadership.

## I. Sponsorship

### **Standard 1: Sponsoring Educational Institution**

The sponsoring educational institution must be a postsecondary academic institution accredited by an institutional accrediting organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). The Institution must be authorized to award degrees. The sponsoring institution must participate in the federal student financial assistance program administered under Title IV of the Higher Education Act. Upon request, the applying campus program must provide the Office of Postsecondary Education Identifier (OPE ID) number assigned by the U.S. Department of Education as proof of participation for financial aid. State Board of Education approvals must also be completed.

## II. Systematic Planning

### Standard 2: Program Mission

The program's mission and goals must be outcomes-focused, form the basis for program planning and implementation, and be compatible with the mission of the sponsoring educational institution and ethics of the health information management profession.

### Standard 3: Program Effectiveness Measures

The program must have an assessment plan for systematic evaluation of mission, goals and measurable outcomes. The program must be involved in an ongoing effort to determine its effectiveness, which constitutes a cycle of quality improvement.

Program goals for the following are required:

#### Curriculum Goal

The program must assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the curriculum, with the results of the program assessment used as the basis for ongoing planning and program improvement. At least one measurable target outcome must be related to curriculum content, improvements and/or effectiveness in approach to curriculum content.

#### Students and Graduates Goal

The program must provide measurable evidence of:

1. students' educational needs are being met, and;
2. graduates demonstrating the AHIMA entry-level curriculum competencies.

#### Faculty Development Goal

The program must provide measurable evidence that all faculty responsible for delivering the academic components of the program maintain knowledge and expertise, including currency in health information management and/or other relevant professional content, practice, and teaching techniques.

### Standard 4: Communities of Practice Outreach Goal

The program must indicate how it responds to the needs of its communities of practice, demonstrating how it translates those needs into an educated, competent workforce, and how the program inspires and supports its communities of practice.

### Standard 5: Program Planning and Assessment

There must be a program assessment plan in place that includes systematic evaluation of its mission goals and outcomes. The assessment plan must include a process for continuous improvement that is in compliance with the sponsoring educational institution's overall evaluation plan.

### Standard 6: Implementation of Program Planning and Annual Assessment Results

Results of the program's annual assessment must be monitored and reflected in an action plan.

### III. Program Autonomy and Governance

#### **Standard 7: Program Governance**

The sponsoring educational institution must identify the lines of authority and administrative governance of the program within the framework of the sponsoring institution.

#### **Standard 8: Program Director Qualifications**

The program must clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the program director necessary to fully support and sustain the program. The program director must be certified as a Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT) or Registered Health Information Administrator (RHIA); there is no exception to this required credential. The program director must possess a baccalaureate degree. The qualifications and responsibilities of individuals responsible for leadership of the program must be documented.

The program director must be a full-time position of the sponsoring institution and have full employee status, rights, responsibilities, and privileges as defined by institutional policy, and be consistent with other similar positions at the institution.

#### **Standard 9: Program Director Responsibilities**

The program director must be responsible for the organization, administration, continuous review, planning, development, and general effectiveness of the program. The program director may be assigned other institutional duties so long as they do not interfere with the management and administration of the program.

The institution must document that the program director has sufficient release time to ensure that the needs of the program are being met. It is mandatory for the program director/program chair to have at minimum, 20% release time per term for administrative and program oversight.

It is customary for faculty professional practice/internship coordinators working under the supervision of the program director or chair to have at minimum, 15% of release time.

#### **Standard 10: Faculty**

The program must have at least two full-time faculty members fully allocated to the HIM program.

#### **Standard 11: Faculty Qualifications**

The two full-time faculty members must hold an AHIMA credential, and all faculty members must have a degree and/or certification in their assigned teaching area. The qualifications of faculty members must include professional preparation and experience, competence in assigned teaching areas, effectiveness in teaching, and scholarly productivity consistent with their faculty appointment and institutional policy.

**Standard 12: Faculty Performance**

The required faculty must provide students with adequate attention, instruction and supervised practice to acquire the knowledge and competence needed for entry-level practice. Faculty (including part-time and adjunct) performance must be evaluated and documented according to the institutional policy; evaluations include teaching effectiveness and scholarly productivity consistent with faculty appointments. Within applicable institutional policies, faculty, students, and others must be involved in the evaluation process.

## IV. Resources

### **Standard 13: Advisory Committee**

Each HIM program must have an advisory committee representative of its communities of interest. Advisory committee responsibilities include assisting program faculty and sponsoring educational institution personnel with the development and revision of program goals and curriculum, monitoring program needs and expectations, and ensuring program responsiveness to change.

The advisory committee must meet annually, at minimum. At least half of the advisory committee must be external to the institution.

### **Standard 14: Professional Development**

Both the program director and HIM faculty, including adjunct instructors, must demonstrate continuing professional development related to the curriculum content, including continuing education in program management, teaching techniques, scholarly achievements, improvements in technology and online teaching and learning methods.

### **Standard 15: Learning Resources**

The program must provide students access to appropriate learning resources to support their educational experience, including access to current technology, computers and relevant software, practice resources, simulation labs, and other materials. These learning resources must accommodate all students enrolled in the program and be sufficient to meet program goals and outcomes.

Technical support services must be identified and available to students as designated by the institutional policies and procedures.

### **Standard 16: Financial Support**

The sponsoring educational institution must provide financial support for the program to achieve its goals and outcomes, and for faculty development.

### **Standard 17: Student Program Progression**

Documentation must be maintained for student admission, advisement, counseling, and progression within the program. Grades and credits for courses must be recorded on the student transcript and permanently maintained by the sponsoring educational institution in a safe and accessible location. Program officials must maintain student records that reflect progress in achieving program requirements.



## V. Curriculum

### **Standard 18: Curriculum**

The program must demonstrate that the curriculum meets or exceeds the professional course content as published in the AHIMA HIM curriculum competencies for associate degree programs. Institutions must have policies regarding the allocation of credit to courses, particularly with respect to the credit value of laboratory and professional practice experience courses.

### **Standard 19: Syllabi**

The curriculum syllabi must document the AHIMA HIM curriculum competencies for associate degree programs. Instruction must be based on clearly written course syllabi and include course objectives and evaluation methods that assess student learning outcomes. Syllabi must include the entry-level competencies appropriate to the course and should clearly state the requirements for successful course completion, what students are expected to learn, what activities they will experience, and how and when they will be evaluated. Program syllabi must follow a standardized format and contain the following:

- Course Number & Title
- Co or Pre-requisites
- Instructor contact information
- Details regarding text/lab purchases required
- AHIMA HIM entry-level curriculum competencies related to each course
- Course Objectives
- Course Schedule
- Evaluation Methods

### **Standard 20: Course Sequence**

Program content must be delivered in an appropriate sequence of didactic, laboratory, and professional practice activities. Course content must be logical and coherent with didactic instruction and related activities organized in each course. Prerequisite courses must be identified and properly sequenced in the curriculum.

### **Standard 21: Online Content Access**

Academic technologies, software applications and simulations, and online or web-enhanced courses have a significant role in the learning environment. To fairly evaluate online content, the program must provide CAHIIM with full access to the Learning Management Systems (LMS) in use for all HIM course content and relevant education applications used to deliver that content.

### **Standard 22: Curriculum—Evaluation of Students**

Student evaluation methods must be varied to provide both student and program faculty with valid indications of the student's progress toward, and achievement of, the competencies stated in the curriculum.

**Standard 23: Professional Practice Experiences**

Professional practice experiences (PPE) must be designed, supervised, and evaluated to reinforce didactic HIM instruction and must include program-coordinated experience at professional practice sites.

Each student must complete a minimum of 40 hours of externally supervised activity prior to graduation.

## VI. Fair Practices

### **Standard 24: Publications & Disclosures**

Program information must accurately reflect the program offered and must be published and accessible to all applicants and enrolled students. Specific content **required** is outlined in the *CAHIIM Accreditation Manual*.

### **Standard 25: Lawful, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Practices**

All activities associated with the program, including student and faculty recruitment, student admission, and faculty employment practices, must demonstrate a culture of lawful and DEI practices in accordance with federal, state and university statutes, rules, and regulations.

## **VII. Administrative Requirements for Maintaining Accreditation**

### **Standard 26: Administrative Requirements**

The program must report all substantive changes as described in the CAHIIM Accreditation Manual in a timely manner, or as specified; noncompliance will result in administrative probation.