



## 2018 Accreditation Standards

### Health Information Management

#### Associate Degree

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Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education

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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 233 N. Michigan Avenue, 21st Floor, 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.

## Mission

CAHIIM strives to carry out its mission by promoting, evaluating, and improving the quality of undergraduate and graduate education in health informatics and health information management.

Through our partnerships with academe and practice fields, CAHIIM serves colleges and universities in a voluntary peer-review process, continuously improving quality education to meet the demands of the healthcare workforce. CAHIIM accreditation is the benchmark by which students and employers determine the integrity of health informatics and health information management education.

## Vision

CAHIIM is the globally recognized and trusted accreditation organization for health informatics and health information management education programs to ensure the development of a workforce that meets the challenge of an information-intensive environment and its impact on global health.

## 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 content, structure and standards, (2) information protection: access, disclosure, archival, privacy and security, (3) health information technologies, (4) revenue management, (5) compliance, and (6) leadership.

## **I Sponsorship**

### **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**

### **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.

Each program will define its own mission and goals which derive from the purposes of its sponsoring educational institution, communities of interest, workforce needs, faculty expertise, and the values of the field of health information management.

(See: [AHIMA Code of Ethics](#))

### **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.

Results of the program's annual assessment must be monitored and reflected in an action plan and reviewed by the program's advisory board. Programs must conduct a qualitative and quantitative assessment of how the program achieves its mission, goals, and target objectives for continual improvement, including a documented, candid assessment of strengths and weaknesses in terms of the program's performance against the accreditation established thresholds.

CAHIIM will seek evidence that there is documentation of changes made in the program. Program officials and faculty are required to compare program performance with the goals and identify ways in which the program can improve. These may include curriculum revisions, improvements in student services, and faculty development activities. An institutional effectiveness survey, or other institutional-level evaluation data, is not a replacement of the program's own evaluation plan. 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.

Annual assessment of the curriculum is required to determine where and when improvements are needed. Assessment is conducted using feedback from students, faculty, graduates, advisory committee, employers, and other relevant sources. 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 assurance that the educational needs of students are met, and that graduates demonstrate at least the AHIMA entry-level curriculum competencies. The program must examine and assess, through goals and target outcomes, whether student learning outcomes progress toward achieving entry-level competencies, and that graduates have met entry-level competencies.

### **Faculty Development Goal**

The program must provide measurable evidence that all faculty responsible for delivering the academic components of the program maintain continuing competence in the content areas in which they teach, and must assure, through annual measurable outcomes, that faculty development planning is targeted to improve faculty knowledge and expertise, including currency in health information management and/or other relevant professional content, practice, and teaching techniques.

## **4 Communities of Practice Outreach Goal**

The program must indicate how it assesses and 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.

## **5 Program Planning and Assessment**

There must be 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.

The program's goals and measurable outcomes must be clearly defined and regularly reviewed for internal and external evaluation.

The program must incorporate current curriculum components and other content changes as identified by AHIMA's Council for Excellence in Education (CEE).

Accredited programs must annually assess its program goals and outcomes as required by the designated CAHIIM reporting system. The program must use the results of annual assessments to document program improvements. Data analysis and action plans must be documented. A program must document how it meets its goals and objectives and how it plans to address observed weaknesses.

## **III Program Autonomy and Governance**

### **6 Measures to Promote Informed Decision Making**

Results of the program's annual assessment must be monitored and reflected in an action plan and reviewed by the program's advisory board. An institutional effectiveness survey or other institutional-level evaluation cannot replace the program's own assessment plan.

The action plan and the results of its implementation must be qualitatively and quantitatively documented by on-going assessments to determine if the program is achieving its mission, goals, and target objectives. Program officials and faculty are required to identify the program's strengths and weaknesses relative to established accreditation thresholds, and suggest program improvements, including curriculum revisions, betterment of student services, and activities for faculty development. CAHIIM will seek evidence that changes to the program are documented.

The program must annually assess and publish on its website student outcomes, which must include annual enrollment numbers and graduation rates.

## **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.

## **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), and must have, at minimum, a baccalaureate degree. The qualifications and responsibilities of the program director 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.

## **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 customary for the program director to have, at minimum, 20% release time per term for administrative and program oversight.

It is customary for program coordinators working under the supervision of the program director or chair to have, at minimum, 15% of release time per term for administrative and program oversight.

The program director and coordinator during the program review process may need additional release time to complete all CAHIIM documentation.

## **10 Faculty**

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

## **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.

## **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**

### **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.

CAHIIM emphasizes the importance of a strong advisory committee comprised of individuals external to the academic institution, such as employers, graduates, healthcare executives and others representative of the communities of interest to assess the program and it aligned with current practices.

The advisory committee must meet annually, at minimum. When warranted, the advisory committee will meet more frequently to review program goals, curricula, etc.

### **14 Professional Development**

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

### **15 Learning Resources and Student Access**

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.

The program must ensure that technology requirements and skills are made known to students before courses begin. Technical support services must be available to students seven days a week.

### **16 Financial Support**

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

### **17 Student Records**

Documentation must be maintained for student admission, advisement, counseling, and evaluation. Records of student evaluations must be maintained in sufficient detail to document learning progress and achievements. 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 evidence of student evaluation on all levels, as well as student progress in achieving program requirements.

## **V Program Curriculum**

### **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.

Teaching and assessment methods should be active, and evidence-based. Analysis of situations in professional contexts and problem-based assessments must be emphasized.

### **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:

- 1 Course Number and Title
- 2 Co- or Pre-requisites
- 3 Instructor contact information
- 4 Details regarding text/lab purchases required
- 5 AHIMA HIM entry-level curriculum competencies related to each course
  - or a table that defines which competencies are seen in each course
- 6 Course Objectives
- 7 Course Schedule
- 8 Evaluation Methods
  - including a weighted scale if points or percentages are used for grading, so that students can determine what is needed to get an A, B, C or D.

### **20 Course Sequence**

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



have policies in place regarding the allocation of credit to courses, particularly with respect to the credit value of laboratory and professional practice experience courses.

## **21 Access to Online Content**

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. The program may limit CAHIIM access to the LMS to a minimum of 90 days, with CAHIIM retaining the option of access extension, if necessary.

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

Student evaluation must be conducted frequently enough to provide both student and program faculty with valid and timely indications of the student's progress toward and achievement of the competencies stated in the curriculum. Student evaluation methodologies (tests, exams, projects, assignments, etc.) may vary in type and construction, but must be able to test different cognitive levels of learning. Programs must show that students are being taught and tested at a variety of taxonomic levels, with emphasis being placed on the use of application and problem-solving techniques. The analysis of situations in professional contexts and problem-based assessment must be emphasized.

## **23 Professional Practice Experiences**

Professional practice experiences (PPE) must be designed and supervised to reinforce didactic instruction and must include program-coordinated experience at professional practice sites. The program must describe how the PPE (e.g., clinical practicum, directed practice experience) is designed, supervised and evaluated, and name the objectives to be achieved in each PPE course. The PPE is a credit-based course, which applies toward degree completion, and requires tuition, fees and costs as normally occurs according to institutional policy. The PPE does not prohibit a paid internship.

Each student must complete a minimum of 40 hours of externally supervised activity prior to graduation. The externally supervised activity PPE must relate to higher level competencies and result in a learning experience for the student and/or a deliverable to a practice site.

Simulation activities designed to replicate PPEs are permitted but cannot totally replace the required 40 hours minimum of an externally supervised activity PPE. The program must describe how simulation activities are designed, supervised, and evaluated, and what objectives are to be achieved by using simulation activities.

*PPE onsite preparation* The health and safety of patients, students, and faculty associated with educational activities must be adequately safeguarded according to the health and safety practices of both the sponsoring educational institution and the professional practice site. The responsibilities of the college, PPE site and students must be documented for externships or professional practice experiences. Either a formal contract or memorandum of understanding (MOU) will suffice, if in accordance with institutional practice. Health, safety, and security policies and requirements must be outlined in the agreement or MOU, and students must be informed of these in advance of the PPE.

## VI Fair Practices

CAHIIM expects the program and the sponsoring institution to comply with the following Fair Practice Standards.

### 24 Publications and Disclosures

The following program information must accurately reflect the program offered and must be published and accessible to all applicants and enrolled students:

- The program and its sponsoring educational institution must accurately represent their location and accreditation status.
- Programs accredited by CAHIIM must use the prescribed Accreditation Statement as provided by CAHIIM.

*Accreditation Statement:* The Health Information Management accreditor of [COLLEGE NAME] is the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM). The College's accreditation for [ASSOCIATE] degree in Health Information Management has been reaffirmed through [YEAR OF NEXT ACCREDITATION CYCLE].

All inquiries about the program's accreditation status should be directed by mail to CAHIIM, 233 N. Michigan Avenue, 21st Floor, Chicago, IL, 60601; by phone at 312.233.1134; or by email at [info@cahiim.org](mailto:info@cahiim.org).

- The Accreditation Statement must also include the CAHIIM Seal graphic in the form provided by CAHIIM.
- Admissions policies and procedures.
- Policies on advanced placement, transfer of credits, and credits for experiential learning.
- Number of credits required for completion of the program.
- Tuition/fees and other costs required to complete the program.
- Policies and procedures for withdrawal and for refunds of tuition/fees.
- Academic calendar.
- Student grievance procedure.
- Criteria for successful completion of each segment of the curriculum and graduation.

Information about student/graduate achievement, including the results of one or more of the programs measurable outcomes, must be published on the program website. This must include, but not be limited to, program completion rate and student satisfaction rate. This standard applies to both accredited programs, and programs in candidacy status.

### 25 Lawful and Non-Discriminatory Practices

All activities associated with the program, including student and faculty recruitment, student admission, and faculty employment practices, must be non-discriminatory and in accordance with federal and state statutes, rules, and regulations.

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

### **26 Substantive Changes**

The program must report all substantive changes as described in the CAHIIM Accreditation Manual in a timely manner.