



TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Health Informatics
& Information Management

Academic Year 2025 - 2026

BSHIM STUDENT HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to introduce the philosophy and objectives of the Texas State University Department of Health Informatics & Information Management (HIIM) to the students in the professional phase of the Bachelor of Science in Health Information Management (BSHIM) degree program. This document has been compiled to familiarize BSHIM students with departmental policies and procedures specific to the HIIM Department and those not addressed in the University catalog or other University publications.

This Handbook is for general information only and is not intended to contain all regulations related to students enrolled in the BSHIM program. The provisions of this handbook do not constitute a contract, either expressed or implied, between an enrolled student and Texas State University. The University reserves the right to withdraw courses at any time, to change fees or tuition, calendar, curriculum, degree requirements, graduation procedures, and any other requirements affecting students. Changes will become effective as determined by the Texas State University Administration and will apply to both prospective students and to those already enrolled. This handbook may be updated at any time.

Texas State University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The BSHIM degree program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education.

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WELCOME

Welcome to the Texas State University Department of Health Informatics & Information Management. Congratulations on making the commitment to continuing your education and we look forward to enabling your educational goals as you advance in the health information management profession at a very exciting time for our field. The purpose of this Handbook is to give you a sense of the University, College, and Department while providing important information to guide you during your time as a student in the BSHIM degree program. Read it carefully, ask questions about what you do not understand, and **keep it available for future reference**. A copy of this will be posted at the departmental website <http://www.health.txst.edu/him>. Listed below are the mission and vision of our national professional associations, the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) and the Health Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS). The professional curriculum for the BSHIM program is designed to conform to guidance from AHIMA's Council on Excellence in Education (CEE), CAHIIM, and HIMSS Approved Education Partners program.

AHIMA Mission <i>Empowering people to impact health.</i>	HIMSS Mission <i>Reform the global health ecosystem through the power of information and technology.</i>
AHIMA Vision <i>A world where trusted information transforms health and healthcare by connecting people, systems, and ideas.</i> (https://www.ahima.org)	HIMSS Vision <i>To realize the full health potential of every human, everywhere.</i> (https://www.himss.org)

This Handbook represents the policies and procedures, curriculum, and philosophy of the faculty in the HIIM Department. Thank you to the faculty, students, and staff who have aided in the preparation of this Handbook. A special thanks to the Department of Physical Therapy for sharing materials for early versions.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH INFORMATICS & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

The Department of Health Informatics & Information Management (HIIM) educates and prepares professionals with the skills and qualities needed to fulfill the multifaceted role of a health information professional and to develop the attitudes and principles which encourage continuing growth in a field that is rapidly expanding in scope.

Health Information Management (HIM) improves the quality and efficiency of healthcare by ensuring that the best information is available to make any healthcare decision. HIM professionals manage healthcare data and information resources. The profession encompasses services in planning, collecting, aggregating, organizing, protecting, analyzing, and securely disseminating individual patient data and aggregating clinical and administrative data. It serves the healthcare industry including clinicians, patient care organizations, payers, researchers, and government agencies, as well as patients and their families.

Projected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to be one of the fastest growing occupations in the United States, health information management is an excellent career choice for the person who seeks a healthcare profession that combines interest in computer sciences, business, management, legal procedures, cybersecurity, patient safety, and healthcare research. HIM professionals play key roles in making the healthcare system work. They perform the data collection, management, and analysis that doctors, nurses, administrators, and other healthcare professionals need to provide quality patient care. These professionals work in a broad range of settings that span the continuum of healthcare, including office-based physician practices, hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, mental health facilities, and public health agencies. The growth of managed care has created additional job opportunities in managed care organizations and insurance companies. Many new job opportunities have resulted from the deployment of the electronic health record (EHR) and related to the vast amount of healthcare data shared through health information exchange (HIE)

MISSION & VISION

The mission of the Department of Health Informatics & Information Management is to educate and prepare professionals with knowledge needed to ensure accessibility, accuracy, availability, integrity, and security of patient health information.

The vision of the Department of Health Informatics & Information Management is to be recognized internationally as a quality producer of health information management professionals equipped with the attitudes and principles that encourage lifelong learning and ethical behavior in a rapidly evolving profession.

PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of Health Informatics & Information Management: The health care industry today is dynamic, both from efforts within itself to seek new and improved health care delivery

systems, and from external developments, in the areas of basic and applied sciences, technology and government.

As a vital part of the health care industry, the health information profession must also be dynamic. The educational program in Health Informatics & Information Management must respond to the projected future needs of the profession.

To meet these needs, the student must be prepared for and willing to accept a multifaceted role as a member of the interprofessional healthcare team - as administrator, planner, consultant, educator, researcher, and practitioner.

The educational program must be geared to the development of those skills and qualities needed to fulfill these roles and to the development of attitudes and principles which will encourage continuing growth in a profession that is rapidly expanding in scope and responsibility in the dynamic environment of the health care industry.

EDUCATION OBJECTIVES

Objectives of the HIIM Department: In addition to preparing the graduates of HIIM to achieve the skills necessary to perform the activities addressed in the Domains, Subdomains, and Task Competencies for Registered Health Information Administrators, the objectives of the professional portion of the HIM curriculum are to prepare the student, by means of theoretical, practical, and clinical instruction to:

1. Develop and demonstrate the ability to respond to the changing informational needs of the patient, the providers of health care, researchers, and educators.
2. Develop and demonstrate awareness of the technologies and equipment affecting information storage and retrieval and to develop the ability to utilize these resources appropriately.
3. Function as a member of the interprofessional healthcare team by development and acceptance of responsibilities in the total health care of the patient.
4. Develop and demonstrate the ability to communicate with ease in a group setting in both the leadership and supportive roles and to communicate effectively in written form.
5. Develop and demonstrate an understanding of the history and evolution of health information management with particular emphasis on current and future developments in the profession.
6. Develop and demonstrate an understanding of the current scope and responsibilities of health information management and its relationship to other professions.
7. Develop an awareness of the need for continued professional education and growth.
8. Develop an interest in the promotion of health information management as a career and in the encouragement of potential candidates toward this goal.

PHILOSOPHY OF SERVICE

The faculty in the HIIM Department value and recognize the importance of the role of service for a HIM professional. Participating in service activities affords the individual the opportunities to share their expertise and skills while benefitting and learning from the expertise and skills of

others. The benefit of visibility and recognition for the individual faculty member, the department, and the University is recognized. All levels and bonds of service are of value from providing assistance with professional activities, to being a presenter, to holding appointed or elected positions within the professional organization. The HIIM Department faculty is committed to maintaining a sustained record of service to support the HIM profession and to serve as a role model for the HIM students to impact the importance of, and an appreciation of the benefits of service.

PHILOSOPHY OF RESEARCH

The HIIM Department faculty values the importance of continued learning, continued development, and validation of the body of evidence-based professional knowledge. The faculty believes the academic environment must provide opportunity for, and involvement in research activities. A variety of kinds of research are necessary for the advancement and recognition of the HIM profession. The HIIM Department is committed to the development of resources and provides opportunities for involvement of students, faculty, and external entities where appropriate.

STUDENT INFORMATION

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENTS FOR BSHIM DEGREE

For those who are seeking a baccalaureate degree in health information management without a prior HIT degree, the basic BSHIM degree plan lists all the coursework that is required.

REQUIREMENTS FOR BSHIM DEGREE – HIT PROGRESSION PROGRAM

For those who have already completed an associate's degree in health information technology at a community college and are progressing to the baccalaureate degree level, some foundation courses are not required in the HIT Progression degree plan.

DECLARING A MINOR

Beginning with the class entering Fall 2022, all students completing the BSHIM degree will also be eligible for a built-in Minor in Health Informatics with no additional course work. Students must contact the College of Health Professions Advising Center to declare this or any minor. A minor is not required for those students completing the BSHIM. However, if a student wishes to complete a minor, there are many options. Texas State minors that would complement the BSHIM include Health Informatics, Business Administration, Computer Science, Healthcare Administration, and Long-Term HealthCare Administration. The student will then be required to complete the minor as outlined in the University catalog. Graduation will occur when the student has completed all requirements for both the major and the minor.

COURSE DELIVERY METHODS

Courses in this department are offered with the following delivery methods:

- Campus or Face-to-Face
- Online or Fully Distance
- Hybrid or HyFlex

All delivery methods involve the same types of assignments, materials, due dates, assessments, and continual engagement with instructors throughout the term. All delivery method schedules are controlled by the instructor, not the student.

During the advising process, students are assigned one of the delivery methods based on individual needs and provided with a list of the correct course sections to be registered. Students are expected to register for the sections and delivery methods specified during the advising session. Students may not switch between delivery methods without approval from the Program Director.

Campus or Face-To-Face delivery method provides the most structure and is recommended for traditional students continuing from high school or community college and returning students that are new to the healthcare field. Course meetings are scheduled with specific days, times, and physical classrooms on either the Round Rock Campus or San Marcos Campus. In-person attendance at all course meetings is required unless excused by the instructor. There is no Electronic Course Fee associated with registration for Campus sections. These sections appear in the course schedule with “Face to Face” as the Instructional Method.

Online or Fully Distance delivery method provides an asynchronous learning option and is recommended for students with full-time jobs, time zone differences, or other constraints that prevent participation in scheduled live course meetings of the other delivery methods. Asynchronous engagement expectations are increased for online sections and students must demonstrate exceptional self-discipline and commitment to be successful. In lieu of attendance at scheduled course meetings, online students are required to engage frequently in online discussions and other activities with faculty and other students. To cover the increased costs of designing and delivering courses online, an Electronic Course Fee applies. These sections appear in the course schedule with “Fully Distance Education” as the Instructional Method.

Hybrid, Blended, or HyFlex delivery method provides the most flexibility with access to both synchronous, live, scheduled class meetings as well as asynchronous activities. Hybrid sections are recommended for students who can participate in some of the scheduled class meetings either on campus or online. Hybrid sections are also recommended for students desiring the structure of a scheduled course but are unable to reliably attend classes on campus due to geographic locations or unpredictable schedules. Engagement will be through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities including live sessions and online discussions. In-person or online attendance at some scheduled course meetings is expected. To cover the increased costs of designing and delivering courses online, an Electronic Course Fee applies. These sections appear in the course schedule with “Hybrid/Blended” as the Instructional Method.

PART-TIME STATUS/RE-ENROLLMENT FOLLOWING WITHDRAWAL

The professional portion of the BSHIM curriculum (usually the junior and senior years) is designed to be completed in two years (four long semesters, plus one summer) as outlined in this handbook. ANY deviation from this format must be approved by the BSHIM Program Director and may delay graduation.

Part-time status: Students may be allowed to complete the BSHIM program on a part-time basis. These students will be assisted in the development of a custom plan of study, which will permit a logical course sequence and allow for steady progression through the Program. Part-time students are to be cautioned that the longer they extend the time of completion of the Program, the greater the chance they will become “dated” in some areas of health information management.

The scheduling of clinical assignments for part-time students will be done on a “site-available” basis due to the limited number of clinical sites available and the number of full-time students progressing through the Program.

Re-enrollment: Because of course sequencing and the scheduling of the clinical assignments, students who leave the program for one or more long semesters (fall or spring) for any reason, will be required to reapply for readmission to the program and may have to repeat the admission process. Reapplication does NOT guarantee readmission to the program.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All course requirements are established by the individual instructor and are delineated in the course syllabus. The course instructor may establish requirements for the course, which are in addition to the course syllabus if the instructor deems them necessary and beneficial to the course, the Department, or the students.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Refer to the individual course syllabus for the specific guidelines and expectations of the faculty member for the submission of written assignments.

GRADING POLICY

A minimal grade of 76%, grade of C, is considered passing for any professional course within the HIIM Department. However, a student must maintain a 2.5 GPA in the BSHIM major coursework to meet graduation requirements. Unless otherwise indicated in a course syllabus, the grading scale will be:

A = 92-100	D = 68-75
B = 84-91	F = below 68
C = 76-83	

ACADEMIC PROBATION

All Texas State undergraduate students are required to maintain a Texas State cumulative GPA of 2.0. Cumulative GPAs are computed at the end of the fall, spring, and summer semesters. If a GPA falls below a 2.0, the student will be placed on academic probation. See the current University Catalog for additional information on probation and suspension.

ACADEMIC PROGRESSION

The BSHIM Program Director and Department Chair will review the academic progress of students enrolled in the program at the end of each semester and recommend specific individual action to be taken. Reviews will be required for any student on probation or suspension status. Academic status will be reported to the department faculty. Recommendations will be made for students requiring further action on status.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Students are expected to seek academic advisement on matters related to degree requirements. The BSHIM Program Director will be responsible for working with the students to develop the degree plan. All requests for course substitutions, permission to take courses elsewhere, etc. must be made to the Program Director and approved by the Department Chair. It is suggested that all students meet with their advisor each semester to review progress toward completion of the degree. Some group advising may also be done from time to time during class time. Students are responsible for initiating requests for academic advising.

Before a student deviates from the established sequence of courses, the BSHIM Program Director should be consulted. Progression in the program and subsequent graduation may be delayed due to inability to take courses due to prerequisite or scheduling issues. The responsibility for proper course selection and registration is the responsibility of the student.

STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The Health Information Management students must abide by all academic requirements of the University catalog from which their degree outline was prepared.

Recognizing that certain knowledge and skills can be identified as “essential,” i.e., required for competence in the majority of professional practice situations and required in the *Standards and Guidelines for an Accredited Educational Program*, the following also applies to a student’s academic standing in the BSHIM Program:

1. Performance at the level of “C” or better must be maintained in each major course. (A “major” course is any course designated with the prefix “HIM” or “HI”).

Performance below a “C” in any one major course regardless of the semester or cumulative grade point average will result in:

1. Repetition of the course with successful completion of “C” or better.
2. Possible delayed progression to subsequent course work, depending on the course and at the discretion of the BSHIM Program Director and Department Chair. Courses determined to be a pre-requisite for subsequent HIM course are:
 - HIM 3364 – prerequisite to HIM 4364
 - All HIM coursework from the first three semesters must be completed prior to taking courses listed for ExSEL. (HIM 4383, 4385, 4389 or 4501)

3. Failure to progress in the program if below a “C” grade in two or more major courses in a given semester.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

Eligibility for graduation requires satisfactory completion of all course work. Students must apply for graduation through the College of Health Professions Advising Center by the posted due date, within the first few weeks of the semester due to graduate.

REQUIREMENTS TO SIT FOR RHIA CERTIFICATION EXAM

The AHIMA (American Health Information Management Association) eligibility requirements to sit for the RHIA exam are that one must have completed a bachelor’s degree in HIM or completed a post-baccalaureate certificate from a CAHIIM-accredited HIM degree program. Information about the exam and application materials can be found at www.ahima.org at the Certifications tab. Students can take the exam during their last semester prior to graduation with written approval by the Program Director. An additional form is required for the application packet which must be signed by the Program Director to verify the anticipated graduation date and that the student is enrolled in all final coursework.

GRADE APPEAL PROCEDURE

If a student does not agree with a final course grade, they may appeal that grade. This must be done in writing using the CHP form (available on the CHP web site, <http://www.health.txstate.edu/About/College-Policies-and-Procedures.html>) within two years following the date that grades are due in the registrar’s office using the following guidelines:

- **First level:** The first level of appeal will be to the faculty member. The formal appeal should be in writing with supporting documentation. The student should meet with the faculty member with written results available to the student within 10 days following receipt of the written appeal.
- **Second level:** The second level of appeal will be to the BSHIM Program Director. This must be in writing with supporting documentation and must be done within 10 days following receipt of the written result of the first level appeal. The student shall be notified of the Program Director’s decision in writing within 10 working days following receipt of the written appeal form.
- **Third level:** The third level of appeal will be the Department Chair. This must be in writing with supporting documentation and must be done within 10 days following receipt of the written result of the second level appeal. The student shall be notified of the Department Chair’s decision in writing within 10 working days following receipt of the written appeal form.
- **Fourth level:** The fourth level of appeal is to the Dean of the College of Health Professions. The written appeal and supporting documentation must be submitted to the Dean within 10 working days of receiving results of the third level appeal. The Dean of the CHP will notify the chair of the Grade Appeals Committee and provide the appeal packet to the chair. After the committee review, the Dean of the CHP will notify the student, the chair of the Grade Appeals Committee, the Department Chair, and the instructor.

Final appeal: The final outcome of a grade appeal is decided by the Dean of the College of Health Professions after a thorough review of the Grade Appeals Committee decision.

HONOR CODE, TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

As members of a community dedicated to learning, inquiry, and creation, the students, faculty, and administration of our university live by the principles in this Honor Code. These principles require all members of this community to be conscientious, respectful, and honest.

WE ARE CONSCIENTIOUS. We complete our work on time and make every effort to do it right. We come to class and meetings prepared and are willing to demonstrate it. We hold ourselves to doing what is required, embrace rigor, and shun mediocrity, special requests, and excuses.

WE ARE RESPECTFUL. We act civilly toward one another, and we cooperate with each other. We will strive to create an environment in which people respect and listen to one another, speaking when appropriate, and permitting other people to participate and express their views.

WE ARE HONEST. We do our own work and are honest with one another in all matters. We understand how various acts of dishonesty, like plagiarizing, falsifying data, and giving or receiving assistance to which one is not entitled, conflict as must with academic achievement as with the values of honesty and integrity.

THE PLEDGE FOR STUDENTS

Students at our University recognize that, to ensure honest conduct, more is needed than an expectation of academic honesty, and we therefore adopt the practice of affixing the following pledge of honesty to the work we submit for evaluation:

“I pledge to uphold the principles of honesty and responsibility at our university.”

THE PLEDGE FOR FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATORS

Faculty at our University recognize that the students have rights when accused of academic dishonesty and will inform the accused of their rights of appeal laid out in the student handbook and inform them of the process that will take place.

“I recognize students’ rights and pledge to uphold the principles of honesty and responsibility at our university.”

ADDRESSING ACTS OF DISHONESTY

Students accused of dishonest conduct may have their cases heard by the faculty member. The student may also appeal the faculty member’s decision to the Honor Code Council. Students and faculty will have the option of having an advocate present to insure their rights. Possible actions that may be taken range from exoneration to expulsion.

Students are required to follow the Honor Code including maintaining academic integrity as outlined in the [Academic Integrity Initiative](#). Specific areas of concern include avoiding plagiarism and appropriate use of artificial intelligence to enable learning.

STUDENT RIGHTS

In the event of student problems, academic or personal, every effort will be made to resolve the difficulties at the Department level. In the event of unresolved problems, BSHIM students are allowed the same due process regulations as any other student enrolled at the University.

STUDENT RECORDS RELEASE

Students may consent to have their records released for any number or purposes including scholarships and financial aid, awards, and employment consideration. Students must complete a release form.

PHOTOGRAPHY RELEASE

Students may consent to have photographs or videos taken for use in educational presentations or advertising and promotion of the program. Students must complete the appropriate release form.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Students will have opportunities to participate in experiential learning experiences throughout BSHIM program, beginning in the first year. The goal of these experiential learning experiences is to bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and professional practice. Students will participate in real-world problem-solving scenarios to apply their knowledge and skills. These experiences provide opportunities for deeper learning and encourage self-reflection to understand strengths, weaknesses, and preferred learning styles.

Students will also be placed in Externally Supervised Experiential Learning (ExSEL) programs. These are multi-week, project-based management affiliations designed to help students demonstrate their ability to assimilate theory with practical application in a real-world environment. The ExSEL consists of placement at a healthcare facility or related organization under the supervision of a qualified preceptor (two weeks for HIT Progression). The externally Supervised Experiential Learning will provide the opportunity to reinforce the student's competencies and skill sets while onsite in a healthcare-related setting.

The Externally Supervised Experiential Learning experience (ExSEL) is a privilege earned by successful progression through the academic curriculum and demonstration of professionalism, maturity, and behavior indicating readiness for successful interactions in a workplace setting. Professional readiness is required for students who will be representing the HIIM Department, College, University, and the HIM profession. If professional readiness is not displayed by a student, ExSEL placement may be delayed a year or more. All appropriate course work must be successfully completed before a student will be allowed to participate in the clinical education portion of the curriculum.

ExSEL SCHEDULING

The ExSEL is traditionally scheduled in the final semester of the Senior year, but it may be scheduled during other semesters with concurrence of the Department Chair, Program Director, and Clinical Coordinator. The ExSEL experiences are not to be arranged by the student alone but are the responsibility of the Clinical Coordinator. It is the student's responsibility to accommodate a preceptor's schedule for completion of ExSEL hours to include adjusting work schedules and/or planning personal time off to complete an ExSEL.

ExSEL SITES

Effort will be made to arrange an ExSEL in the location requested by the student but cannot be guaranteed. Students are encouraged to consider sites away from their immediate area if they have an interest in ultimately relocating or if they have family or friends that could provide housing in an alternate area. ExSEL sites are determined by the site preceptor and organization. Some ExSEL sites require additional fees for parking, screening, etc. It is the student's responsibility to pay these fees. The Clinical Coordinator has no way to guarantee placement in the student's preferred site.

PRELIMINARY REQUEST FOR ExSEL PLACEMENT

Students will be required by the Clinical Coordinator to complete forms necessary for placement. Ignoring any due dates or requirements of ExSEL preplacement may result in delay of ExSEL placement and graduation for a year or more. Prior to completing the SEL request, students should consider their goals and experience and the types of opportunities that may provide the most effective reinforcement of the classroom experience. Students must meet with the Clinical Coordinator to discuss goals for the ExSEL and explore ideas for placement. See the ExSEL Request Form on the BSHIM Canvas site.

COMMUNICATION WITH CLINICAL COORDINATOR

Students are required to be responsive to all communication from the Clinical Coordinator via email, Canvas, and Zoom in order to be successfully placed in a ExSEL. As outlined in the TXST Student Handbook, timely use of the university email account is the responsibility of the student. Should a student choose to check their Texas State email or ExSEL Preparation Canvas site infrequently, that behavior can lead to a significant delay in ExSEL placement and graduation. Missing scheduled appointments with the Clinical Coordinator can also lead to a delay in ExSEL placement and graduation.

HEALTH FORM

Students are required to submit a completed College of Health Professions Immunization and Testing Form signed by a licensed healthcare professional. This form can be found on the BSHIM Canvas site and is a requirement for all ExSEL placement sites. In addition, many ExSEL sites have other vaccination requirements for placement in addition to the ones listed on the Immunization and Testing Form. If you have not had or do not intend to have those required vaccinations, this can hinder the ability of the Clinical Coordinator to find a site for you and may

delay your placement in a ExSEL. It is important to communicate any concerns you have to the Clinical Coordinator about this form as early as possible to inform ExSEL site selection.

BACKGROUND CHECK/DRUG SCREENING

Many sites require background checks and drug screening. If required, they must be obtained at your expense. You will be notified by the Clinical Coordinator if they are required for a placement. Please note if negative results appear on either your background check or drug screen you may not be able to complete ExSEL. It is important to communicate any concerns you have about passing these screenings to the Clinical Coordinator as early as possible to inform ExSEL site selection.

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

Students are expected to behave in a manner commensurate with their status as students completing their final degree requirements in a professional program. In the event a preceptor reports unprofessional or dangerous behavior while a student is completing a ExSEL, consequences may include removal of the student from their ExSEL placement and dismissal from the program.

ExSEL DRESS CODE

The dress code is determined by each clinical site and is generally business casual. Some sites may require personal protective equipment such as masks.

PROFESSIONAL/PERSONAL CONDUCT

ATTENDANCE

As a student in a professional program, it is expected you will use your time wisely to engage with instructors and classmates to facilitate learning.

CAMPUS-BASED STUDENTS

Attendance at all class meetings is required unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor, or a genuine emergency occurs. Individual instructors will document attendance requirements in the course syllabus. Attendance is required at all scheduled ExSEL sessions.

ONLINE STUDENTS

Content and expectations for online students are comparable to those for the campus-based classes. Due to the nature of the course delivery, online students must be active learners to engage in the courses appropriately. This active engagement includes becoming familiar with the Canvas course site within the first few days of the semester, making note of due dates, course expectations, and format of the material presented at the course site. From that point on, it is imperative that the course site be accessed with active engagement a minimum of weekly and whatever frequency is needed to keep up, participate, and submit requirements in a timely manner. Faculty maintain frequent contact with their course sites, but students must take the

initiative to interact with the site frequently and contact the faculty member via e-mail or phone when assistance is needed. Students should become familiar with the Canvas help lines. Specific requirements for accessing course information will be given by faculty for the respective courses.

CLASSROOM DRESS

Students should dress appropriately for classroom engagement. There are no specific requirements for dress for on-campus and online lectures and labs UNLESS a guest lecturer is scheduled. When guests are planned, business casual attire is expected. If an instructor determines a student is not dressed appropriately, the student will be asked to change their dress or leave the class, either on campus or online.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Students are full partners in fostering a classroom environment which is conducive to learning. To ensure that all students have the opportunity to gain from time spent in class, unless otherwise approved by the instructor, students are prohibited from engaging in any form of behavior that detracts from the learning experience of fellow students.

All classes are considered important and therefore should be taken seriously. Students are expected to behave in a manner commensurate with their status as mature, intelligent, and professional student. Cheating, in any form, will not be tolerated. Situations determined by the faculty to involve cheating will be treated severely (possible dismissal from the program). The following information on Academic Honesty and Academic Offenses is taken from the latest edition of the Texas State publication of the *Student Handbook*.

BEHAVIORS

CLASSROOM

Students are expected to behave in a manner commensurate with their status as a student in a professional program.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Texas State does not allow sexual harassment. Should a Texas State University student believe they have been sexually harassed, contact the Title IX Coordinator or the Department Chair. Texas State complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, protecting certain confidentiality rights of students.

PROFESSIONAL

In addition to a commitment to lifelong learning, students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior. This is defined by the program as the demonstration values, attitudes, and behaviors consistent with the expectations of the public and the profession. These values and behaviors are delineated for the profession by the AHIMA Code of Ethics. Students are expected to adhere to the AHIMA Code of Ethics.

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS

Professional abilities include those attributes, characteristics, or behaviors that are not explicitly part of a profession's core of knowledge but are nevertheless required for success. HIM-specific professional behaviors include:

1. Critical Thinking
2. Communication
3. Problem Solving
4. Interpersonal skills
5. Responsibility
6. Professionalism
7. Use of constructive feedback
8. Effective use of time and resources
9. Stress Management
10. Commitment to learning

The faculty believe that each student should develop an entry-level mastery (behaviors demonstrated upon graduation and entry into the profession) of each of these skills by graduation. This belief is based on the following assumptions: the process of becoming socialized into a profession requires hard work and takes a long time and therefore must begin early; a repertoire of behaviors, in addition to a core of knowledge and skills, is important to be a successful HIM Professional. Professional behaviors are defined by the ability to generalize, integrate, apply, synthesize, and interact effectively; whether behaviors can be "taught" or not, the fact remains that behaviors are learned; and behaviors can be objectified and assessed.

HIM COMPUTER LAB RULES

The HIM Computer Lab is a common facility shared by students and faculty in the program. The following rules are set to allow us to share the room with minimum difficulty or inconvenience.

GENERAL RULES

The HIM Computer Lab is generally available to students between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. unless a class is in session, or a scheduled meeting is being held there.

- If the HIM Lab door is locked, notify the HIIM department office.
- The reference material available for you to use in the lab must stay in the lab. Please return this material to the shelves when you are done.
- Do not adjust the thermostat in the room.
- Do not move the computer equipment or desks.
- The open lab times are made available for students to use as a place to study and work on course assignments and to use the computers. The area must be conducive to these activities. Students being excessively loud and disruptive may be asked to leave.

COMPUTER RULES

Computers may be used by HIM students for all class work. Students are expected to work independently.

- You must log onto the computers using your account only. Do not share your password with others.
- Do not change the computer settings unless instructed to do so by a faculty member.
- Do not copy any application programs from the computers.
- Do not add or delete any programs from the computers.
- The HIIM department is not responsible for your documents. Save your documents to a jump drive, OneDrive, U drive, cloud storage, or other location you control.
- The hard drive will periodically be cleaned of all files without notice.
- Log off your machine, but do not shut down the computer.

PRINTER

Report all issues with the printer to the HIIM department office. Do NOT attempt to clear jams, change toner, or change the settings on the printer. Notify the HIIM department office if additional paper is needed.

COMMUNICATIONS

FACULTY OFFICE HOURS

Each faculty member establishes office hours based on the semester's schedule. Please refer to the course syllabus for current office hours. Faculty may agree to see students outside of their posted office hours through an open-door policy and/or by appointment as outlined in the syllabus. Office staff will be glad to assist if there are issues with reaching faculty.

TELEPHONES

Each faculty member has a direct office phone which has voicemail capability. Feel free to leave a voice mail message.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Each faculty member has an e-mail address and encourages students to communicate via e-mail. **Students are expected to use their Texas State e-mail account** and to check their e-mail for regular announcements or specific messages. Email from outside the university may not be read.

When using electronic communication, please use correct etiquette. E-mail can be a valuable communication tool, however, it can often create miscommunications if not used effectively.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones should be turned to silent mode or in the off position during classes. Text messaging is prohibited as well as phone calls when classes are in session.

COMPUTERS IN THE CLASSROOM

Students are allowed to use personal computers in the classroom for class purposes. Checking e-mail, surfing the Internet or other distracting activities are prohibited. Violation of this requirement may result in loss of privileges for all students.

MAILBOXES

Faculty members have mailboxes in the Department workroom. You may ask the office staff to place an item in the faculty mailbox. There is an outgoing mail pickup location in the faculty office. You are free to use this for outgoing mail. Drop the item in the box and it will be picked up during the regular mail delivery cycle.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The faculty use the university's learning management system for course support. Students should become familiar with the system. Questions to instructors are welcome.

PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT

COMMUNITY

The Department faculty encourages all students to participate in community and professional activities. Involvement in such activities is one step toward becoming a complete professional. Such activities include participating as a volunteer at the RELAY FOR LIFE, Bobcat Days, Open Houses, Texas State student organizations, or involvement in other professional groups.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) is the organization representing HIM professionals and HIM students in the United States. AHIMA is divided into its components of the state associations to which members are assigned based on place of residency. AHIMA members in Texas are also members of TxHIMA which consists of local districts throughout the state.

The Health Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) is a professional organization committed to reforming the global health ecosystem through the power of information and technology. HIMSS members engage online as well as locally with chapters in many cities across the country.

MEMBERSHIP

Students are eligible for discounted student membership in both AHIMA and TxHIMA, unless they already hold an AHIMA credential (RHIT, CCA, etc.). Students are encouraged to become members to reap the many benefits of membership including scholarships, publications, continuing education, professional conferences, networking with colleagues, and peer support. Student membership during the professional program allows a graduate to qualify for reduced registration fees to meetings, and reduced rates for taking the RHIA exam. Membership information can be obtained by going to www.ahima.org or from any faculty member.

Students are eligible for FREE student membership in HIMSS, unless they already hold a HIMSS credential (CAHIMS, CPHIMS, etc.). HIMSS student membership includes membership in one local chapter. In Texas, HIMSS has chapters in Austin, Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston, West Texas (Lubbock), and South Texas (San Antonio). Please visit the BSHIM Canvas site to join.

Students are encouraged to consider joining AHIMA and HIMSS to enable online and local engagement with professionals in the field. There are numerous benefits of membership including scholarships, mentoring, networking, community service, and professional service.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

PHONES

The Department phone number is (512) 716-2840. This number may be used in emergency situations to contact a student during business hours.

CONTACT FOR IMPORTANT OFFICES

- College of Health Professions, Dean's Office: www.health.txstate.edu, 512-245-3300
- Round Rock Campus Administration: www_rrc.txst.edu, 512-716-4400
- Financial Aid: www.finaid.txstate.edu, 512-245-2315
- Alcohol and Drug Compliance Services: www.adrc.txstate.edu, 512-245-2124
- Career Services: www.careerservices.txstate.edu, 512-245-2645
- Crisis Hotline: www.counseling.txst.edu/crisis.html, 1-800-841-1255
- Counseling Center: www.counseling.txstate.edu, 512-245-2208
- Disability Services: www.ods.txstate.edu, 512-245-3451
- Student Health Center: www.healthcenter.txstate.edu, 512-245-2161
- Writing Center: www.writingcenter.english.txstate.edu, 512-245-3018
- Alkek Library: www.library.txstate.edu, 512-245-3681, 512-716-4700
- Bookstore: <https://www.bkstr.com/texasstatestore/home>, 512-245-2273
- University Police Department: www.police.txstate.edu, 512-245-2805

CONFIDENTIALITY

**And whatsoever I shall see or hear in the course of my profession, as well as outside my profession... if it be what should not be published abroad, I will never divulge, holding such things to be holy secrets." Hippocratic Oath*

Confidential information is information about a patient that is furnished by the patient directly or even from a third party, including information that comes to you in writing or through electronic means. Any time you think a patient has a reasonable expectation that sensitive information will not be shared, treat the information as confidential. The patient who chooses to share confidential information with you has the expectation that he or she can control that information for his or her own welfare. Confidential information should be used to facilitate the goal of helping the patient and be kept from unauthorized people. It is not considered a breach of confidentiality if information is shared with other health professionals involved in the patient's care, as long as the information has some relevance regarding that case.

ANY BREACH OF CONFIDENTIALITY IS GROUNDS FOR DISMISSAL FROM THE DEPARTMENT.

EXAMPLES OF BREACH OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

1. Discussing a patient's condition or treatment in a public setting;
2. Naming a patient and the patient's condition or treatment in a public setting;
3. Speaking of a patient within hearing range of other patients;
4. Accessing a patient's chart when not involved in that patient's care or as a course assignment;
5. Asking co-workers about the condition or treatment of a patient known to you;
6. Reading correspondence or information relating to a patient or employee or discussing that information with others;
7. Discussing information which a supervisor indicates is confidential.

EXAMPLES OF POOR SENSITIVITY CONSIDERED A BREACH OF CONFIDENTIALITY

1. Asking loudly in the waiting room (or other area) about a patient's condition, treatment, lab work, test results, etc.
2. Making light of patient's condition or personal characteristics.
3. Discussing personal matters of another student or supervisor within hearing range of patients or other students.

HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (HIPAA)

In 1996, Congress passes HIPAA mandating the adoption of Federal privacy protections for individually identified health information. In response to this mandate, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) published the Privacy Rule in the Federal Register of December 28, 2008. Final rules were issued in August 2002 making modifications to the Privacy Rule. Final Privacy Rules can be found at <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/privacy/index.html>. These rules provide comprehensive federal protection for the privacy of health information. The Privacy Rule sets a federal floor safeguard to protect the confidentiality of information. The rule does not replace federal, state, or other laws that provide individuals with even greater privacy protections. Confidentiality is certainly a key element of HIPAA.

DEGREE PLANS

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT:



Name: _____
 Degrees completed: _____
 Credentials: _____

Bachelor of Science in Health Information Management

GENERAL EDUCATION CORE (43 hours)		HIM PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM (64 hours)	
Core Component	Core Component #		
English 1310	010		~~~~ Fall Year 1 (16 hours) ~~~~
English 1320	010	HIM 3301	Hospitals and Health Systems
Math 1315 or equivalent	020	HI 3310	Health Informatics
Natural Science _____ (3 hours) ¹	030	HIM 3463	Foundations of Health Information Management
Natural Science _____ (3 hours) ¹	030	HIM 3367	Disease and Medical Science
Philosophy 1305 or 1320 (WI at Texas State)	040	HIM 3390	Principles of Management in HIIM
Art, Dance, Music, or Theatre Arts 2313	050		~~~~ Spring Year 1 (15 hours) ~~~~
History 1310 (WI at Texas State)	060	HI 3311	Databases in Healthcare
History 1320 (WI at Texas State)	060	HIM 3350	Legal and Ethical Aspects of HIIM
Political Science 2310	070	HIM 3380	Quality Management for HIIM
Political Science 2320	070	HIM 3364	Medical Coding I
Social Science (Anthropology 1312 or Geography 1310 or Psychology 1300 or Sociology 1310)	080	HIM 4393	Project Management for HIIM
Communications 1310	090		~~~~ Summer Year 1 (6 hours) ~~~~
English 2310, 2320, 2330, 2340, 2359 or 2360	090	HIM 4370	Finance & Reimbursement Methodologies for HIIM
US 1100 -- University Seminar (1 hr.)		HIM 4363	Comparative Record Systems
Foreign language requirement: Students who did not satisfactorily complete at least two years of the same foreign language in high school, must complete two semesters (6-8 hours) of a single foreign language as part of the general education core curriculum.			~~~~ Fall Year 2 (13 hours) ~~~~
Minimum 2.50 Overall GPA to Apply		HI 4401	Advanced Health Informatics and Security
Electives to complete 120 hours required for BS degree		HIM 4331	Research and Data Analytics for HIIM
		HIM 4364	Medical Coding II
		HIM 4320	Principles of Information Governance
			~~~~ Spring Year 2 (14 hours) ~~~~
<b>PREREQUISITES for BSHIM (13 hours)</b>		HIM 4383	Seminar in Health Information Management
HP 3325 Healthcare Statistics ²		HIM 4385	Practicum for HIIM
BIO 2430 Human Physiology & Anatomy		HIM 4390	Contemporary Leadership Principles for HIIM
ISAN 1323 Intro to Microcomputer App or CS1308		HIM 4501	Professional Practice Experience (5 weeks)
HIM 2360 Medical Terminology			<b>HIM 4388 and HIM 4389 may be substituted for HIM 4501 for RHIT progression students and others with a significant amount of HIM or related work experience and by approval of the Department Chair.</b>
<b>FOOTNOTES</b>			
1) 3 hrs. from Natural Science: For course options, see the TXST Undergraduate Catalog			
2) 3 hrs. from Statistics: HP 3325, PSY 2301, SOC1 3307, MATH 2328 <u>QR</u> CJ 3347			
All Health Information Management (HIM or HI) courses require a minimum grade of "C"			
Catalog designation determines the curriculum and other academic policies that apply to a student. Students must graduate within six years of the semester used to designate their catalog; otherwise, they are subject to the curriculum and academic policies of a subsequent catalog.			

# BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (HIT PROGRESSION)



Name: _____  
 Degrees completed: _____  
 Credentials: _____

## Bachelor of Science in Health Information Management HIT Progression

GENERAL EDUCATION CORE (42 hours)		HIM PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM (52 hours)	
Core Component	Core Component #		~~~ <u>Fall, Year 1 (9 hours)</u> ~~~
English 1310	010	HI 3310	Health Informatics
English 1320	010	HIM 3390	Principles of Management in HIIM
Math 1315	020	HIM 4364	Medical Coding II
Natural Science _____ (3 hours) ¹	030		
Natural Science _____ (3 hours) ¹	030		
Philosophy 1305 or 1320 (WI at Texas State)	040		~~~ <u>Spring Year 1 (12 hours)</u> ~~~
Art, Dance, Music, or Theatre Arts 2313	050	HI 3311	Databases in Healthcare
History 1310 (WI at Texas State)	060	HIM 3350	Legal Aspects of HIIM
History 1320 (WI at Texas State)	060	HIM 3380	Quality Management for HIIM
Political Science 2310	070	HIM 4393	Project Management for HIIM
Political Science 2320	070		
Social Science (Anthropology 1312 or Geography 1310 or Psychology 1300 or Sociology 1310)	080		~~~ <u>Summer Year 1 (9 hours)</u> ~~~
Communications 1310	090	HIM 4370	Finance & Reimbursement Methodologies for HIM
English 2310, 2320, 2330, 2340, 2359 or 2360	090	HIM 4388	Practicum (Project based, NO facility assignment)
<input type="checkbox"/> Foreign language requirement: Students who did not satisfactorily complete at least two years of the same foreign language in high school, must complete two semesters (6-8 hours) of a single foreign language as part of the general education core curriculum.		HIM 4363	Comparative Record Systems
<u>Minimum 2.50 Overall GPA to Apply</u>			~~~ <u>Fall Year 2 (10 hours)</u> ~~~
<b>Electives</b> to complete 120 hours required for BS degree		HI 4401	Advanced Health Informatics and Security
<b>PREREQUISITES for BSHIM (10 hours)</b>		HIM 4331	Research and Data Analytics for HIIM
<input type="checkbox"/> HP 3325 Statistics for the Health Professional ²		HIM 4320	Principles of Information Governance
<input type="checkbox"/> BIO 2430 Human Anatomy & Physiology			
<input type="checkbox"/> ISAN 1323 Introduction to Microcomputer			
Applications			~~~ <u>Spring Year 2 (12 hours)</u> ~~~
<u>HIT transferred credit substituted for:</u>		HIM 4383	Seminar in Health Information Management
HIM 2360 Medical Terminology		HIM 4385	Practicum FOR HIIM
HIM 3301 Hospitals and Health Systems		HIM 4390	Contemporary Leadership Principles for HIIM
HIM 3463 Foundations of Health Information Management		HIM 4389	Professional Practice Experience, two week, full-time management affiliation
HIM 3367 Disease and Medical Science			
HIM 3364 Medical Coding I			
<b>FOOTNOTES</b>			
1) 3 hrs. from Natural Science: For course options, see the TXST Undergraduate Catalog			
2) 3 hrs. from Statistics: HP 3325, PSY 2301, SOCI 3307, MATH 2328 <u>OR</u> CJ 3347			
All Health Information Management (HIM or HI) courses require a minimum grade of "C".			
Catalog designation determines the curriculum and other academic policies that apply to a student. Students must graduate within six years of the semester used to designate their catalog; otherwise, they are subject to the curriculum and academic policies of a subsequent catalog.			

Updated 04/2025

## **KNOWLEDGE DOMAINS AND CURRICULUM**

The HIIM curriculum is designed to align with the AHIMA knowledge domains and the CAHIIM curriculum standards as described at:

<https://www.ahima.org/education-events/academic-center/academic-research-requests/resource-pages/him-curricula/>

<https://www.cahim.org/accreditation/health-information-management/>

## AHIMA CODE OF ETHICS

<https://bok.ahima.org/doc?oid=105098>

### Preamble

The ethical obligations of the health information management (HIM) professional include the safeguarding of privacy and security of health information; appropriate disclosure of health information; development, use, and maintenance of health information systems and health information; and ensuring the accessibility and integrity of health information.

Healthcare consumers are increasingly concerned about security and the potential loss of privacy and the inability to control how their personal health information is used and disclosed. Core health information issues include what information should be collected, how the information should be managed, who should have access to the information, under what conditions the information should be disclosed, how the information is retained, when it is no longer needed, and how is it disposed of in a confidential manner. All of the core health information issues are addressed in compliance with state and federal regulations, and employer policies and procedures.

Ethical obligations are central to the professional's responsibility, regardless of the employment site or the method of collection, storage, and security of health information. In addition, sensitive information (e.g., genetic, adoption, substance use, sexual health, and behavioral information) requires special attention to prevent misuse. In the world of business and interactions with consumers, expertise in the protection of information is required.

### Purpose of the American Health Information Management Association Code of Ethics

The HIM professional has an obligation to demonstrate actions that reflect values. The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) Code of Ethics sets forth these principles. (See also [AHIMA Mission, Vision, Values](#)) The code is relevant to all AHIMA members, non-members with the Commission on Certification for Health Informatics and Information Management (CCHIIM) certifications, and students enrolled in a formal certificate or degree granting program directly relevant to AHIMA's Purpose regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve. These purposes strengthen the HIM professional's efforts to improve overall quality of healthcare.

The AHIMA Code of Ethics serves six purposes:

- *Promotes high standards of HIM practice.*
- *Summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values.*
- *Establishes a set of ethical principles to be used to guide decision-making and actions.*
- *Establishes a framework for professional behavior and responsibilities when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.*
- *Provides ethical principles by which the general public can hold the HIM professional accountable.*
- *Mentors practitioners new to the field to HIM's mission, values, and ethical principles.*

The code includes principles that are enforceable and aspirational. The extent to which each principle is enforceable is a matter of professional judgment to be exercised by those responsible for reviewing alleged violations of ethical principles.

### Principles

The following principles are based on the core values of the American Health Information Management Association and apply to all AHIMA members, non-members CCHIIM certifications, and students.

1. *Advocate, uphold, and defend the consumer's right to privacy and the doctrine of confidentiality in the use and disclosure of information.*
2. *Put service and the health and welfare of people before self-interest and conduct oneself in the practice of the profession so as to bring honor to oneself, their peers, and to the health information management profession.*
3. *Preserve, protect, and secure personal health information in any form or medium and hold in the highest regard health information and other information of a confidential nature obtained in an official capacity, taking into account the applicable statutes and regulations.*
4. *Refuse to participate in or conceal unethical practices or procedures and report such practices.*
5. *Use technology, data, and information resources in the way they are intended to be used.*
6. *Advocate for appropriate uses of information resources across the healthcare ecosystem.*
7. *Recruit and mentor students, peers and colleagues to develop and strengthen professional workforce.*
8. *Represent the profession to the public in a positive manner.*
9. *Advance health information management knowledge and practice through continuing education, research, publications, and presentations.*
10. *Perform honorably health information management association responsibilities, either appointed or elected, and preserve the confidentiality of any privileged information made known in any official capacity.*
11. *State truthfully and accurately one's credentials, professional education, and experiences.*
12. *Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration in situations supporting ethical health information principles.*
13. *Respect the inherent dignity and worth of every person.*

### **AHIMA Code of Ethics Guidelines**

Violation of principles in the Code of Ethics does not automatically imply legal liability or violation of the law. Such determination can only be made in the context of legal and judicial proceedings. Alleged violations of the code are subject to a peer review process. Such processes are generally separate from legal or administrative procedures and insulated from legal review or proceedings to allow the profession to counsel and discipline its own members. Although in some situations, violations of the code would constitute unlawful conduct subject to legal process.

Guidelines for ethical and unethical behavior are provided to assist with the interpretation of the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) Code of Ethics. The terms "shall" and "shall not" are used as a basis for setting high standards for behavior. This does not imply that everyone "shall" or "shall not" do everything that is listed. This concept is true for the entire code. If someone engages in the stated activities, ethical behavior is the standard. The guidelines are not a comprehensive list. For example, the statement "safeguard all confidential consumer information to include, but not limited to, personal, health, financial, genetic and outcome information" can also be interpreted as "shall not fail to safeguard all confidential consumer information to include personal, health, financial, genetic, and outcome information."

A code of ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior. Moreover, a code of ethics cannot resolve all ethical issues or disputes or capture the richness and complexity involved in striving to make responsible choices within a moral community. Rather, a code of ethics sets forth values and ethical principles to which a Health Information Management (HIM) professional can aspire and by which actions can be judged. Ethical behaviors result from a personal commitment to engage in ethical practice.

Professional responsibilities often require an individual to move beyond personal values. For example, an individual might demonstrate behaviors that are based on the values of honesty, providing service to others, or demonstrating loyalty. In addition, professional values may require promoting confidentiality, facilitating interdisciplinary collaboration, and refusing to participate or conceal unethical practices. Professional values could require a more comprehensive set of values than an individual's need to be an ethical agent in one's own personal life.

The AHIMA Code of Ethics is to be used by AHIMA members, non-members with the Commission on Certification for Health Informatics and Information Management (CCHIIM) certifications, students enrolled in a formal certificate or degree granting program directly relevant to AHIMA's Purposes, and consumers, agencies, organizations, and bodies (such as licensing and regulatory boards, insurance providers, courts of law, government agencies, and other professional groups) that choose to adopt it or use it as a frame of reference. The AHIMA Code of Ethics reflects the commitment of all to uphold the profession's values and to act ethically. Individuals of good character who discern moral questions and, in good faith, seek to make reliable ethical judgments, must apply ethical principles.

The code does not provide a set of rules that prescribe how to act in all situations. Specific applications of the code must consider the context in which it is being considered and the possibility of conflicts among the values and principles.

## **How to Interpret the Code of Ethics**

### **Principles and Guidelines**

The following ethical principles are based on the core values of the American Health Information Management Association and apply to all AHIMA members, non-members with CCHIIM certifications, and students enrolled in a formal certificate or degree granting program directly relevant to AHIMA's Purposes. Guidelines included for each ethical principle are a non-inclusive list of behaviors and situations that can help to clarify the principle. They are not meant to be a comprehensive list of all situations that can occur.

#### ***1. Advocate, uphold, and defend the consumer's right to privacy and the doctrine of confidentiality in the use and disclosure of information.***

A health information management professional shall:

- 1.1. Safeguard all confidential consumer information to include, but not limited to, personal, health, financial, genetic, and outcome information.
- 1.2. Engage in social and political action that supports the protection of privacy and confidentiality and be aware of the impact of the political arena on the health information issues for the healthcare industry and the public.

1.3. Advocate for changes in policy and legislation to ensure protection of privacy and confidentiality, compliance, and other issues that surface as advocacy issues and facilitate informed participation by the public on these issues.

1.4. Protect confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service. Disclose only information that is directly relevant or necessary to achieve the purpose of disclosure. Release information only with valid authorization from a consumer or a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of a consumer or as authorized by federal or state regulations. The minimum necessary standard is essential when releasing health information for disclosure activities.

1.5. Promote the obligation to respect privacy by respecting confidential information shared among colleagues, while responding to requests from the legal profession, the media, or other non-healthcare related individuals, during presentations or teaching and in situations that could cause harm to people.

1.6. Respond promptly and appropriately to consumer requests to exercise their privacy rights (e.g., access, amendments, restriction, confidential communication, etc.). Answer truthfully all consumers' questions concerning their rights to review and annotate their personal biomedical data and seek to facilitate consumers' legitimate right to exercise those rights.

***2. Put service and the health and welfare of persons before self-interest and conduct oneself in the practice of the profession so as to bring honor to oneself, peers, and to the health information management profession.***

A health information management professional shall:

2.1. Act with integrity, behave in a trustworthy manner, elevate service to others above self-interest, and promote high standards of practice in every setting.

2.2. Be aware of the profession's mission, values, and ethical principles, and practice in a manner consistent with them by acting honestly and responsibly.

2.3. Anticipate, clarify, and avoid any conflict of interest, to all parties concerned, when dealing with consumers, consulting with competitors, in providing services requiring potentially conflicting roles (for example, finding out information about one facility that would help a competitor), or serving the Association in a volunteer capacity. The conflicting roles or responsibilities must be clarified and appropriate action taken to minimize any conflict of interest.

2.4. Ensure that the working environment is consistent and encourages compliance with the AHIMA Code of Ethics, taking reasonable steps to eliminate any conditions in the organizations that violate, interfere with, or discourage compliance with the code.

2.5. Take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work one actually performs, or to which one contributed. Honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others verbally or written, such as in publication.

A health information management professional shall not:

2.6. Permit one's private conduct to interfere with the ability to fulfill one's professional responsibilities.

2.7. Take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further one's own personal, religious, political, or business interests.

*3. Preserve, protect, and secure personal health information in any form or medium and hold in the highest regard health information and other information of a confidential nature obtained in an official capacity, taking into account the applicable statutes and regulations.*

A health information management professional shall:

3.1. Safeguard the privacy and security of written and electronic health information and other sensitive information. Take reasonable steps to ensure that health information is stored securely and that consumers' data and information is not available to others who are not authorized to have access. Prevent inappropriate disclosure of individually identifiable information.

3.2. Take precautions to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of information transmitted, transferred, or disposed of in the event of termination, incapacitation, or death of a healthcare provider to other parties through the use of any media.

3.3. Inform recipients of the limitations and risks associated with providing services via electronic or social media (e.g., computer, telephone, fax, radio, and television).

***4. Refuse to participate in or conceal unethical practices or procedures and report such practices.***

A health information management professional shall:

4.1. Act in a professional and ethical manner at all times.

4.2. Take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues. If needed, utilize the AHIMA Policy and Procedures for Disciplinary Review and Appeal for potential ethics complaints.

4.3. Be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for handling concerns about colleagues' unethical behavior. These include policies and procedures created by AHIMA, licensing and regulatory bodies, employers, supervisors, agencies, and other professional organizations.

4.4. Seek resolution if there is a belief that a colleague has acted unethically or if there is a belief of incompetence or impairment by discussing one's concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such discussion is likely to be productive.

4.5. Consult with a colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action when there is direct knowledge of a health information management colleague's incompetence or impairment.

4.6. Take action through appropriate formal channels, such as contacting an accreditation or regulatory body and/or the AHIMA Professional Ethics Committee if needed.

4.7. Cooperate with lawful authorities as appropriate.

A health information management professional shall not:

4.8. Participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud and abuse, or deception. A non-inclusive list of examples includes:

- *Allowing patterns of optimizing or minimizing documentation and/or coding to impact payment*

- *Assigning codes without provider documentation*
- *Coding when documentation does not justify the diagnoses or procedures that have been billed*
- *Miscoding to avoid conflict with others*
- *Engaging in negligent coding practices*
- *Hiding or ignoring review outcomes, such as performance data*
- *Failing to report licensure status for a provider through the appropriate channels*
- *Recording inaccurate data for accreditation purposes*
- *Allowing inappropriate access to genetic, adoption, health, or behavioral health information*
- *Misusing sensitive information about a competitor*
- *Developing a “record set” that excludes meaningful consumer information to be shared with consumers to protect the health system or specific providers*
- *Violating the privacy of individuals*

Refer to the [AHIMA Standards of Ethical Coding](#) for additional guidance.

4.9. Engage in any relationships with a consumer where there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the consumer.

***5. Use technology, data, and information resources in the way they are intended to be used.***

A health information management professional shall:

5.1. Use healthcare employer technology resources within the confines of organizational policies.

5.2. Ensure all data and resulting information accessed and derived from healthcare technology resources are not used outside of the scope of the job.

A health information management professional shall not:

5.3. Compromise the integrity of healthcare data through any intentional acts or acts that are generally known to create risks to data integrity.

***6. Advocate for appropriate uses of information resources across the healthcare ecosystem.***

A health information management professional shall:

6.1. Verify requests for data and information are based on appropriate, verifiable needs and conditions and fall within the confines of organizational policies, regulations, and laws.

6.2. Educate stakeholders about the need to maintain data integrity and the potential impacts should data integrity not be maintained.

A health information management professional shall not:

6.3. Manipulate information systems to produce or display data and resulting information that is intentionally misleading

**7. Recruit and mentor students, staff, peers, and colleagues to develop and strengthen professional workforce.**

A health information management professional shall:

- 7.1. Provide directed practice opportunities for students.
- 7.2. Be a mentor for students, peers, and new health information management professionals to develop and strengthen skills.
- 7.3. Be responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries for students, staff, peers, colleagues, and members within professional organizations.
- 7.4. Evaluate students' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful when functioning as educators or clinical internship supervisors.
- 7.5. Evaluate staff's performance in a manner that is fair and respectful when functioning in a supervisory capacity.
- 7.6. Serve an active role in developing HIM faculty or actively recruiting HIM professionals.

A health information management professional shall not:

- 7.7. Engage in any relationships with a person (e.g. students, staff, peers, or colleagues) where there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to that other person.

**8. Represent the profession to the public in a positive manner.**

A health information management professional shall:

- 8.1. Be an advocate for the profession in all settings and participate in activities that promote and explain the mission, values, and principles of the profession to the public.

**9. Advance health information management knowledge and practice through continuing education, research, publications, and presentations.**

A health information management professional shall:

- 9.1. Develop and enhance continually professional expertise, knowledge, and skills (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision). Contribute to the knowledge base of health information management and share one's knowledge related to practice, research, and ethics.
- 9.2. Base practice decisions on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge relevant to health information management and health information management ethics.
- 9.3. Contribute time and professional expertise to activities that promote respect for the value, integrity, and competence of the health information management profession. These activities may include teaching, research, consultation, service, legislative testimony, advocacy, presentations in the community, and participation in professional organizations.
- 9.4. Engage in evaluation and research that ensures the confidentiality of participants and of the data obtained from them by following guidelines developed for the participants in consultation with appropriate institutional review boards.

9.5. Report evaluation and research findings accurately and take steps to correct any errors later found in published data using standard publication methods.

9.6. Design or conduct evaluation or research that is in conformance with applicable federal or state laws.

9.7. Take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and staff development, addressing current knowledge and emerging developments related to health information management practice and ethics.

***10. Perform honorably health information management association responsibilities, either appointed or elected, and preserve the confidentiality of any privileged information made known in any official capacity.***

A health information management professional shall:

10.1. Perform responsibly all duties as assigned by the professional association operating within the bylaws and policies and procedures of the association and any pertinent laws.

10.2. Uphold the decisions made by the association.

10.3. Speak on behalf of the health information management profession and association, only while serving in the role, accurately representing the official and authorized positions of the association.

10.4. Disclose any real or perceived conflicts of interest.

10.5. Relinquish association information upon ending appointed or elected responsibilities.

10.6. Resign from an association position if unable to perform the assigned responsibilities with competence.

10.7. Avoid lending the prestige of the association to advance or appear to advance the private interests of others by endorsing any product or service in return for remuneration. Avoid endorsing products or services of a third party, for-profit entity that competes with AHIMA products and services. Care should also be exercised in endorsing any other products and services.

***11. State truthfully and accurately one's credentials, professional education, and experiences.***

A health information management professional shall:

11.1. Make clear distinctions between statements made and actions engaged in as a private individual and as a representative of the health information management profession, a professional health information association, or one's employer.

11.2. Claim and ensure that representation to consumers, agencies, and the public of professional qualifications, credentials, education, competence, affiliations, services provided, training, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, and other relevant professional experience are accurate.

11.3. Claim only those relevant professional credentials actually possessed and correct any inaccuracies occurring regarding credentials.

11.4. Report only those continuing education units actually earned for the recertification cycle and correct any inaccuracies occurring regarding CEUs.

***12. Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration in situations supporting ethical health information principles.***

A health information management professional shall:

12.1. Participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the well-being of consumers by drawing on the perspectives, values, and experiences of those involved in decisions related to consumers.

12.2. Establish clearly professional and ethical obligations of the interdisciplinary team as a whole and of its individual members.

12.3. Foster trust among group members and adjust behavior in order to establish relationships with teams.

***13. Respect the inherent dignity and worth of every person.***

A health information management professional shall:

13.1. Treat each person in a respectful fashion, being mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity.

13.2. Promote the value of self-determination for each individual.

13.3. Value all kinds and classes of people equitably, deal effectively with all races, cultures, disabilities, ages and genders.

13.4. Ensure all voices are listened to and respected.

**Acknowledgement**

Adapted with permission from the 1999 Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers.

**Resources**

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