



GREAT FALLS COLLEGE MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Revised August 2024

WELCOME!

Welcome to the Great Falls College Montana State University's Health Information Technology (HIT) program



Your course work and clinical experience in health care facilities will become your immediate preparation for your professional career. In the courses you are now about to undertake, you will be concentrating your skills and efforts on the health care field by learning to maintain, organize and produce health care information. This information is of extreme importance to the various health care professionals, the patient, and the management of the health care facility.



This handbook has been prepared to better acquaint you with the HIT program and various program requirements. A good deal of work and dedication will be accomplished through your enrollment in this program. This program has been designed to assist you in dealing with the challenges you will face in your professional career.



Best of luck to each of you in your endeavors as a Health Information Technology student and in your future career as a Registered Health Information Technician.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY:

Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere. -- *Chinese Proverb*

Our focus is on the development of critical thinking skills, personal growth, and awareness of global issues essential for lifelong learning in the field of Health Information Technology. Learning occurs both in and out of the classroom, with students and faculty who are challenged to question, analyze, problem solve.

PROGRAM ACCREDITATION:

The Health Information Technology Program (HIT) is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management (CAHIIM) in cooperation with the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA).

DESCRIPTION OF PROFESSION:

The health information technician possesses the technical knowledge and skills necessary to maintain components of health record systems consistent with the requirements of the health care delivery system. In all types of health care facilities and in various locations within a facility, the health information technician analyzes health records according to standards; abstracts and codes diseases and procedures; maintains and utilizes a variety of health record indices and registers; and compiles administrative and health statistics and prepares reports for reimbursement, facility planning, marketing, quality assessment and research.

OUTCOMES AND GOALS:

The primary goal of the HIT Program at Great Falls College Montana State University is to establish and maintain an educational program that is accredited and of the highest quality.

HIT Program Outcomes

- Use computer applications and software in maintaining health information in health records.
- Research and rely on knowledge in medical terminology, anatomy and physiology, pharmacology, and disease processes.
- Identify and apply accurate diagnostic and procedural codes for reimbursement.
- Exhibit professional communication skills in oral, written, and electronic formats.
- Maintain confidentiality of health information, while developing a commitment to adhering to the standards of professional integrity, honesty and fairness.
- Interact professionally in the healthcare environment with healthcare providers, patients/clients and the public, while understanding diversity among cultures and societies.
- Analyze qualitative and quantitative information, including graphic, numerical and verbal data.
- Apply knowledge of health information technology to solve problems, while utilizing critical thinking skills.

It is Great Falls College Montana State University's intent to graduate students who have developed the professional and personal attitude and skills necessary to begin their careers as Registered Health Information Technicians and successfully pass the national examination for RHIT.

To achieve this goal, an appropriate curriculum has been developed for the HIT Program, which enables the student to demonstrate the Domains, Tasks, and Subtasks for health information technicians (see Appendix).

ADMISSION TO THE HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM:

Admission to the HIT Program follows the accepted practices of Great Falls College Montana State University as stated in the Great Falls College Montana State University catalog.

The following requirements must be met before declaring HIT as a major:

- Official college transcripts including transfer credits and waivers must be on file in the Great Falls College Montana State University Records office.
- High school diploma or GED score is required.
- Appropriate placement scores for Math and Writing must be on file in the Great Falls College Montana State University Records office prior to acceptance into the HIT program.

Great Falls College Montana State University maintains a policy of non-discrimination on the basis of minority status, sex, handicap or other impermissible grounds in the provision of all related services provided to members of the public by facilities under control of the College.

The College commits itself to a continuing program to assure that unlawful discrimination does not occur in the services it renders to the public and that those sectors of the public most affected by this policy be kept informed of its content.

HEALTH INSURANCE REQUIREMENT:

All students enrolled for 4 or more credits are required to have health insurance. For students without adequate coverage, Great Falls College Montana State University offers a program developed especially for Montana University System students.

CURRICULUM:

An associate of applied science degree with a major in HIT is granted by the College after completion of the course requirements in the two-year program.

The HIT program is completed online through the use of the learning management system. It is strongly recommended that students have a good grasp of how to use a computer and the ability to access the Internet.

A minimum grade of "C-" or higher must be earned in coursework.

In order to enroll for the Professional Practice classes the student must have successfully completed all required coursework for the Professional Practice Experience with an overall average grade point average of at least 2.0.

GRADING SCALE:

The official grading scale for the all HIT courses is:

A----- 92 - 100%

B----- 84 - 91%

C----- 76 - 83%

D----- 68 - 75%

F----- 67% and below

ATTENDANCE:

Students are expected to attend all class sessions for which they are registered, except in the case of illness or emergency. Instructors have the responsibility of recording and submitting written records of absences from the discussion or chat boards. These records are frequently requested by employers and by agencies that provide financial support.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

Effective oral and writing skills are important to the Health Information Technician. Grades will be based on mechanics as well as content. Grammar, spelling, organization and punctuation will be evaluated on all documents. One point will be automatically deducted for each error up to a total of 5 points.

TEXTBOOKS AND COURSE MATERIALS:

Course syllabi will list the textbooks required for each course required for the HIT Program. Exams, quizzes, assignments, etc., will be given to evaluate student learning. Health information is a professional field; therefore, **consideration should be given to retaining these textbooks and course materials** for use in other classes, for review for the national examination, and for practice in the professional field.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE REQUIREMENT (TWO-YEAR DEGREE):

An overall 2.0 grade point average must be maintained in all course work leading to an associate degree in applied science as a Health Information Technician.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/PLAGARISM:

Academic integrity is expected of all students. Academic integrity means representing oneself and one's work honestly. Misrepresentation is cheating or stealing since it means that a student claims credit for ideas or work that are not actually his/hers and is thereby trying to get a grade that is not actually earned. The following definitions are examples of academic dishonesty:

1. Cheating on examinations by:
 - a. Taking advantage of prior information not authorized by the instructor regarding questions to be asked on the exam.
 - b. Copying from someone else's paper, disk or other data.
 - c. Helping or allowing someone else to copy work.
 - d. Copying material from the Internet and presenting it as one's own work.
 - e. Not following correct procedures.
 - f. Other forms of misrepresentation (i.e., lying, etc.).
2. Plagiarizing from work of others can be done through the Internet or other electronic documents. When dealing with written sources, a clear distinction should be made between quotation and paraphrases. Buying a paper and handing it in as one's own work is plagiarism.
3. Cheating on lab reports, practice sets and class assignments by:

- a. Falsifying data.
 - b. Submitting data not based on the student's own work.
 - c. Using Artificial Intelligence
4. Misusing Great Falls College Montana State University's software and hardware; students may not copy any Great Falls College Montana State University software. Also, students may not delete, alter, add or copy Great Falls College Montana State University files and/or data from the microcomputers.

Academic dishonesty will result in a "0" for the work involved and may result in dismissal from the HIT Program.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

All information gained in the HIT Program relating to patients, physicians, or private hospital business is considered confidential information. Disclosure of any confidential information is cause for immediate dismissal from the program and College. Acceptance into the HIT program is contingent upon signing a Confidentiality statement. See Appendix A for Confidentiality statement.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT:

HIT students at Great Falls College Montana State University, are expected to adhere to the College's Student Code of Conduct ([Student Conduct & Grievance Policy](#)) and to follow the American Health Information Management Association's Code of Ethics and Coding Ethics (see Appendix B in this document) in addition to acting in a professional manner at all times. Students will respect the confidentiality of any information they might acquire while a student in any health care facility. If a student should participate in any unethical, unprofessional or disruptive behavior, the student will be removed from the internship site and may be dismissed from the program and/or the College.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

The student will be required to complete the experience in the following manner:

It is the student's responsibility to find their own clinical site. In addition, the student is also responsible for paying for any fees that the clinical site may ask (ex. Background test, drug test..etc.). Each student will obtain the official Professional Practice Experience (PPE) Manual during the Spring semester that precedes the student's eligibility for AHMS 275 HIT Professional Practice Experience coursework. The student will need to read, sign and return the "contract" page of this manual during Week 1 of their registration into AHMS 275 HIT Professional Practice Experience.

In addition, the following information pertains:

1. The HIT Program Director retains the responsibility for securing required legal agreements, and assessing appropriateness of facility for individual student needs. Violation of this rule could result in dismissal from the HIT program.
2. Some sites specify that a student must interview in person prior to acceptance. Other sites will require background checks, drug screens, updated immunization records as well as other documentation. Please be aware these types of requirements can result in additional costs to you as the student. These requirements are not covered by the College.

3. Any site has the option of declining a student due to staffing problems, program changes, construction, etc.
4. All placement decisions are at the discretion of the clinical site.
5. The student *may not be paid* for any part of the professional experience hours. For example, if a student works at a healthcare facility you may complete the clinical hours after work hours. Students may be employed in the clinical facility outside regular class hours provided the work is limited to the minimum number of hours required and does not interfere with regular academic responsibilities or regular job duties. The work must be noncompulsory, paid, and subject to employee regulations.

SUPERVISION OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES:

Professional practice supervisors will evaluate the performance of students based on specific objectives and competencies outlined by the various “projects” and “learning experiences” required by the clinical site at the time of the PPE. Students will be notified of all the documents required legal and required necessary in order for the student to begin clinicals. This process will be completed during the semester prior to the start of actual course required in the program.

Students participating in professional practice are there to gain experience and competency in the variety of tasks required of the Health Information Technician. Students are not to be substituted for paid staff in this learning situation. Once a student has demonstrated proficiency, the student may be permitted to perform procedures under close supervision.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS:

Evidence of acceptable health status prior to the beginning of the professional experience is required for all students. This may or may not require additional costs to you as a student depending upon what health status reports are required by the site facility.

NATIONAL EXAMINATION (RHIT):

Only students who have graduated from an **accredited** Health Information Technology program may sit for the Registered Health Information Technician certification examination. The national examination for Health Information Technicians is administered by a professional examination service for the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA). This exam is offered electronically throughout the year. Successful completion of this examination permits the individual to use the initials “RHIT” or “Registered Health Information Technician.”

Completion of all graduation requirements will enable the student to submit an application for the national examination.

AMERICAN HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES:

Health Information Technology students are required to maintain a student membership in the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA). Membership carries an automatic subscription to the Journal of the AHIMA.

APPENDIX A

CONFIDENTIALITY & RECEIPT OF HANDBOOK STATEMENTS

Copies of these have been taken from the handbook and are combined together as one document for the purposes of completion and submission to the course Instructor and Program Director for safe-keeping.

Please do NOT complete them here for submission to the Instructor! Forms for completion and submission will be found in the Course shell.

<p>GREAT FALLS COLLEGE MSU HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM RECEIPT OF STUDENT HANDBOOK</p>

I have received the HIT/HICS Program Student Handbook.

I understand that I am responsible for the information that is contained within this Handbook.

I agree to abide by the policies and procedures as stated in this Handbook.

I understand that I must abide by the professional ethics and standards accepted by professionals and technicians in the Health Information Management profession.

Student Name_____

Date_____

**GREAT FALLS COLLEGE MSU
HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM
STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND ETHICAL STANDARDS
(Student Confidentiality Statement)**

I, the undersigned, agree to abide by the Code of Ethics established by my Professional Organization (American Health Information Management Association) at all times.

I will be professional in performing any Health Information related skills. I understand that confidentiality of any medical information obtained by any experience provided through my training and education as a Health Information professional is privileged. A breach of confidentiality will result in dismissal from the program. Similarly, any break of conduct with respect to the Honor Code, as it is described in the Great Falls College Montana State University catalog will also result in expulsion from the program, without opportunity for re-entry.

Student Name_____

Date_____



**GREAT FALLS
COLLEGE**
MONTANA STATE
UNIVERSITY

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2100 16th Ave S
Great Falls, MT 59405
(406) 771-5128
Fax: (406) 771-4329
www.gfcmu.edu

Release of Information Authorization for Lab/Clinicals/Practicum

Lab/Clinicals/Practicum occurring at your assigned facility is a partnership between Great Falls College MSU and your assigned facility. The college and your facility have determined that it is administratively necessary for enrollment, attendance, assessments (clinical, labs, classroom feedback), and student conduct at your facility be reported to/shared with Great Falls College and vice versa in order for you to complete your college courses and graduate from your program.

Great Falls College may be required to submit a copy of any or all your required clinical documents, including, but not limited to, immunization records, criminal background checks and CPR documentation. This information is required by these facilities in order to protect the safety of their patients and staff, and they will not allow students to attend clinicals without it.

INITIAL I understand I have the right to refuse to share my health information and background status with clinical agencies and that my refusal will make me ineligible for clinical placement. I understand that I cannot complete the program without the required clinicals and will need to withdraw from the program.

INITIAL I also understand I may be responsible for the cost of the background check and drug testing.

☐ CHECK Box My signature below authorizes Great Falls College MSU to discuss and/or release the above information to my assigned facility(ies).

☐ CHECK Box My signature below DOES NOT authorize Great Falls College MSU to discuss and/or release the above information to my assigned facility(ies).

Student's Name: _____ ID: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ST: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Information may be shared until this date:

Last updated 1/24/2024

Handbook questions

Using the Health Information Technology program handbook, answer the following questions. These questions have also been combined in a separate document for you to complete along with the receipt of the handbook and the confidentiality statements.

Please do NOT complete these questions here for submission to the Instructor! A specific document to complete and submit the questions to the instructor is found in the Course shell.

1. What are the requirements that must be met before declaring Health Information Technology as a major?
2. What is the lowest possible grade you can earn in each HIT course?
3. Define "Academic Integrity?"
4. What is a Professional Practice Experience?
5. When can you take the National Examination? If you pass, what are the credentials?
6. What is the purpose of the AHIMA Code of Ethics?
7. If you disclose any confidential information what is the result?

APPENDIX B

Code of Ethics 2019 Ethical Principles

Ethical Principles: The following ethical principles are based on the core values of the American Health Information Management Association and apply to all AHIMA members and certificants.

A health information management professional shall:

1. ***Advocate, uphold, and defend the individual'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 persons 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 regards 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 use 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 health information practice.***
13. ***Respect the inherent dignity and worth of every person.***

AHIMA Code of Ethics: Revised & adopted by AHIMA House of Delegates. (2019, April 29). AHIMA Code of Ethics: AHIMA HIM Body of Knowledge. Retrieved from <https://bok.ahima.org/doc?oid=105098#.XmaJVkp7kdU>

Must use copy/paste for the above link to find the document. You cannot use Ctrl + Click as it will result in an error "No Document Found".

HIM ASSOCIATE DEGREE ENTRY-LEVEL COMPETENCIES (2018)

HIM ASSOCIATE DEGREE ENTRY-LEVEL COMPETENCIES	Required Bloom's Level
Domain I. Data Structure, Content, and Information Governance	
1. Describe Healthcare Organization from the perspective of Key Stakeholders	2
2. Apply policies, regulations, and standards to the management of information.	3
3. Identify policies and strategies to achieve data.	3
4. Determine compliance of health record content within the health organization.	5
5. Explain the use of classification systems, clinical vocabularies, and nomenclatures.	2
6. Describe components of data dictionaries and data sets.	2
6. DM Evaluate data dictionaries and data sets for compliance with governance standards.	5
Domain II. Information Protection: Access, Use, Disclosure, & Security	
1. Apply privacy strategies to health information.	3
2. Apply security strategies to health information.	3
3. Identify compliance requirements throughout the health information life cycle.	3
Domain III. Informatics, Analytics, and Data Use	
1. Apply health informatics concepts to the management of health information.	3
2. Utilize technologies for health information management.	3
3. Calculate statistics for healthcare operations.	3
4. Report healthcare data through graphical representations.	3
5. Describe research methodologies used in healthcare.	2
6. Describe the concepts of managing data.	3
7. Summarize standards for the exchange of health information.	2
6. DM Manage data within a database system.	5
7. DM Identify standards for exchange of health information.	3
Domain IV. Revenue Cycle Management	
1. Validate assignment of diagnostic and procedural codes and groupings in accordance with official guidelines.	3
2. Describe components of revenue cycle management and clinical documentation improvement.	2
3. Summarize regulatory requirements and reimbursement methodologies.	2
1. RM Determine diagnostic and procedural codes and groupings in accordance with official guidelines.	5
2. RM Evaluate revenue cycle processes.	5
3. RM Evaluate compliance with regulatory requirements and reimbursement methodologies.	5
Domain V. Health Law & Compliance	
1. Apply legal processes impacting health information.	3
2. Demonstrate compliance with external forces.	3
3. Identify the components of risk management.	3
4. Identify the impact of policy on health care.	3
Domain VI. Organizational Management & Leadership	

HIM ASSOCIATE DEGREE ENTRY-LEVEL COMPETENCIES	Required Bloom's Level
1. Demonstrate fundamental leadership skills.	3
2. Identify the impact of organizational change.	3
3. Identify human resource strategies for organizational best practices.	3
4. Utilize data-driven performance improvement.	3
5. Utilize financial management processes.	3
6. Examine behaviors that embrace cultural diversity.	4
7. Assess ethical standards of practice.	5
8. Describe consumer engagement activities.	2
9. Identify processes of workforce training for healthcare organizations.	3

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY – REVISED FOR AHIMA CURRICULA MAPPING

Taxonomy Level	Category	Definition	Verbs
1	Remember	Exhibit memory of previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts, and answers	Choose, Define, Find
2	Understand	Demonstrate understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions, and stating main ideas.	Collect, Depict, Describe, Explain, Illustrate, Recognize, Summarize
3	Apply	Solve problems in new situations by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques, and rules in a different way.	Adhere to, Apply, Articulate, Calculate, Demonstrate, Discover, Educate, Identify, Implement, Interview, Model, Organize, Plan, Promote, Protect, Report, Utilize, Validate
4	Analyze	Examine and break information into parts by identifying motives or causes. Make inferences and find evidence to support generalizations.	Analyze, Benchmark, Collaborate, Examine, Facilitate, Format, Map, Perform, Take part in, Verify
5	Evaluate	Present and defend opinions by making judgements about information, validity of ideas, or quality of work based on a set of criteria.	Advocate, Appraise, Assess, Compare, Comply, Contrast, Determine, Differentiate, Engage, Ensure, Evaluate, Interpret, Justify, Leverage, Manage, Mitigate, Oversee, Recommend, Solve
6	Create	Compile information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions.	Build, Compile, Conduct, Construct, Create, Design, Develop, Forecast, Formulate, Govern, Integrate, Lead, Master, Present; Propose