



***Montgomery College***

***Health Information Management Program***

***Medical Coder / Abstractor /  
Biller Certificate Program***

***Student Handbook***

Tenth Edition  
June 2019

Dear Student:

Welcome! We are pleased to have you as a student in the Health Information Management (HIM) and Medical Abstractor/Coder/Biller Programs at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus of Montgomery College.

We hope to assist you in becoming a highly competent Health Information Manager, and credentialed as a Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT) and/or Certified Coding Associate (CCA). We use the term "assist" to help you understand that you are responsible for successfully completing the 67-credit Health Information Management degree, or 31-credit Medical Coder/Abstractor/Biller certificate program. It is also your responsibility to pass the Accreditation Examination given by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) that qualifies you to practice as a Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT), or the Certified Coding Associate (CCA) for the coding certificate.

This Student Handbook provides you with guidelines for the program since it is probably a very different learning experience than any that you have previously encountered. Curriculum, policies, and guidelines for professional as well as academic behavior specific to this program are available for your reference. General Montgomery College regulations are in the College catalog.

This health science career program takes much time and dedication. Realizing this, we would like to wish you success as you make a commitment to yourself and this program of study. Let us also offer our assistance in helping you make the next years fulfilling ones.

With best wishes,

*Corinne Smith*

Corinne Smith MBA RHIA CCS CDIP CHDA  
Health Information Management  
Program Coordinator

*Tonya Powell*

Tonya Powell MSA RHIT CCS CPHQ CHDA  
Health Information Management  
Clinical Coordinator

*The Health Information Faculty reserves the right to modify course content and evaluation procedures as deemed necessary. They also reserve the right to modify the content of this Student Handbook as appropriate.*

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**MONTGOMERY COLLEGE  
Takoma Park Campus**

**Health Information Management  
Medical Coder/Abstractor/Biller Certificate**

**ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE**

Dr. DeRionne Pollard  
President  
300 MK 240-567-5267

Dr. Brad Stewart  
Provost  
306 ST 240-567-1312

Dr. Monique Davis  
Basic, Applied and Health Sciences Dean  
419 HSC 240-567-5557

**FACULTY AND FACILITIES DIRECTORY**

Corinne Smith MBA RHIA CCS CDIP CHDA  
Program Coordinator  
243 HSC 240-567-5521

Tonya Powell MSA RHIT CCS CPHQ CHDA  
Clinical Coordinator  
242 HSC 240-567-5519

Maureen Mirowski  
Health Sciences Counselor  
120 ST 240-567-1480

Montgomery College  
Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus  
7600 Takoma Avenue  
Takoma Park, Maryland 20912-4197  
240-567-1300

### MAJOR CLINICAL AFFILIATES

FACILITY
Anne Arundel Medical Center 2001 Medical Parkway Annapolis, MD 21401
Children's National Medical Center 111 Michigan Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20010
Doctor's Community Hospital 3118 Good Luck Road Lanham, MD 20706
George Washington University Hospital 901 23rd Street, NW Washington, DC 20037
Georgetown University Hospital 3800 Reservoir Road Washington, DC 20007
Hebrew Home 6121 Montrose Road Rockville, MD 20814
Holy Cross Hospital 1500 Forest Glen Road Silver Spring, MD 29010
Howard County General Hospital 5755 Cedar Lane Columbia, MD 21044
Howard University Hospital 2041 Georgia Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20060
Kaiser Permanente Multiple locations in DC and MD
Montgomery General Hospital 18101 Prince Phillip Drive Olney, MD 20832
National Rehabilitation Hospital 102 Irving Street, NW Washington, DC 20010
Shady Grove Adventist Hospital 9901 Medical Center Drive Rockville, MD 20850
Sibley Memorial Hospital 5255 Loughboro Road, NW Washington, DC 20016

FACILITY
Suburban Hospital 8600 Old Georgetown Road Bethesda, MD 20814
The Washington Home 3720 Upton Street, NW Washington, DC 20016-2299
United States Soldiers' and Airmans' Home 3700 North Capital Street, NW Washington, DC 20317
Veterans Administration Hospital 50 Irving Street, NW Washington, DC 20422
Washington Adventist Hospital 7600 Carroll Avenue Takoma Park, MD 20912
Washington Hospital Center 110 Irving Street, NW Washington, DC 20010

## PHILOSOPHY OF THE PROGRAM

The philosophy and goals of the Program interface with those of Montgomery College. They are exhibited by the College in its support of professionalism and academic excellence, by the provision of qualified faculty, a carefully designed academic environment, and in the Program by a wealth of clinical experience.

The College is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The Program is Accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM) with the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA). These organizations cooperate in establishing and maintaining standards of quality for the Program. These standards, the Essentials and Guidelines of an Accredited Educational Program for the Health Information Management, associate level are found in the appendices. Most Montgomery College offerings well-exceed the quality described in these standards. Any student who fully meets the standards described should be able to function as a Health Information Technician upon graduation.

Humanistic attitudes are fostered in both the didactic and clinical areas. The faculty believes that humanistic qualities are of key importance in this health-related career. Through the development of interpersonal relationships with patients and fellow professionals, self-awareness and self-actualization may be enhanced.

The faculty constructs behavioral and performance objectives throughout the program to produce graduates who are highly proficient and competent in the art and science of health information management. Graduates will become knowledgeable in the theoretical foundation of their profession and capable of functioning in a variety of clinical settings.

As in any learning experience, the faculty will play the role of facilitator to the student. A competency-based program in which didactic and professional practice learning are closely correlated will help students develop into professionals who are practiced in the art of problem solving, and capable enough to find advancement in their chosen field. The instructors will guide and direct the students in discovering the role that they must play in actively participating and being responsible for the learning processes in order to become proficient as practicing health information technicians.

Finally, the faculty feels that being RHIT and/or CCA certified by the American Health Information Management Association is the ultimate goal of the graduate. This accreditation plays a key role in providing opportunities to work in the profession and to contribute to the health information sciences. Graduates who are knowledgeable in the theoretical foundation of health information should be able to share their knowledge with fellow health information technicians, future students and allied health workers. Continuing education will enable these health information technicians to assume higher levels of responsibility in their occupation. These factors will enable the registered health information technician to become a fully-qualified member of the health care team.

**HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM GOALS  
 PROGRAM EVALUATION PLAN**

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>TARGET OUTCOMES</b>	<b>PLAN</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>RESPONSE/ CORRECTIVE ACTION</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>
Faculty will demonstrate current knowledge, skills, qualifications and CE in the content areas they teach	All of the faculty will retain current credentials and be up to date on CE's	Each faculty member will participate in continuing education activities	All of the faculty will provide proof of CE and credential status	Assist in providing support for CE and credential maintenance	Program Coordinator	Annually
Program graduates will demonstrate the HIM entry-level competencies.	100% of the students will pass the RHIT certification examination.	Faculty and advisory committee will review and modify curriculum to meet the current competencies and knowledge clusters.	Results of last year's exam are reviewed.	Develop review modules and update curriculum where appropriate	Program and Clinical Coordinators	Annually
The HIM curriculum will include the required knowledge clusters with content and experiences to enable students to meet current entry-level competencies	Students will sit for the RHIT examination during their last PPE course. Pass rate of RHIT exam will meet or exceed national RHIT pass rate (70%).	Continue the course competency exams at the end of each course. Continue to review individual results with students. Require all students to sit for the RHIT exam in their final semester.	To increase the number of students successfully sitting for the RHIT exam	Develop study modules based on pass/fail domain test data.	Program and Clinical Coordinator	Annually
The HIM program will demonstrate responsiveness to the needs of the community of interest	Employers will hire and retain graduates. Course material will meet the needs of the employers	Review employer surveys and information from the advisory committee about community needs	To ensure that the program is providing employees that will benefit the community	Continue to work with employers and advisory committee to determine the community needs	Program and Clinical Coordinator	Annually



## **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

A registered health information technician is a skilled person qualified by successful completion of a national accreditation examination to provide numerous services to the health care community. Many objectives must be met to become competent. At the conclusion of the program, the graduate will meet the entry-level requirements as outlined by the American Health Information Management Association (see Appendix B, HIM Associate Degree Entry-Level Competencies, Domains, Subdomains and Tasks for 2006 and beyond and Appendix C, CAHHIM Standards and Interpretations for Accreditation of Associate Degree Programs in Health Information Management).

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION**

Throughout the Program, the students participate in evaluating the Health Information Management courses in the curriculum. Upon graduation, the graduates will complete a survey for a self-evaluation of the program's effectiveness. It is very important for the alumni to be a part of this follow-up process and they will be encouraged to participate in it. Prospective employers in area hospitals, offices, clinics, and other institutions will also be asked to complete a survey to measure the quality of performance of the entry-level health information management graduate from the program.

## **ADMISSION POLICY**

See college website or catalog for admission criteria. Health Information Management and Coding Certificate Programs admission criteria, policies and procedures are available at <http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/him>

## **FEES AND EXPENSES**

Tuition charges are based on the student's residence status as of the first day of classes for any semester.

Fees related to registration, tuition and other charges are payable in full immediately upon completion of registration, unless prior arrangements have been made with the student financial aid offices. Additional information regarding financial obligations and policies are online at <http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/edu/department2.aspx?id=20117> or in the College Catalog.

## **CREDIT BY EXAMINATION FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS**

For those students who qualify, the College provides an opportunity to enroll in more advanced classes, thereby waiving the prerequisites of a specific course. Placement is generally determined by an examination and by an evaluation of a student's official transcript.

Students transferring in from another CAHIIM-accredited Health Information Management program must have left their previous program in "good standing" and must have three letters of recommendation. One recommendation must be from the Program Director and the second from a clinical instructor. The third can be the choice of the student.

Credits may/may not be granted for courses waived. A course may be substituted for the one waived. Persons who feel qualified for this type of waiver should contact the student admission office. The student will then be directed to the appropriate academic unit. A special form must also be obtained from the counseling office on the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus. More detailed information regarding advanced placement and advanced standing can be found in the College Catalog.

## **READMISSION**

A student whose work has been interrupted for one or more semesters must apply for readmission to the program. An application for readmission should be filed as early as possible, but no later than March 1, with the admissions office to allow sufficient time for an interview with a member of the counseling staff and program coordinator to discuss eligibility and placement availability in the program.

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

Each student is responsible for providing Montgomery College and the HIM Program information regarding a change in address or phone number. This information is important in case of an emergency during the time the student is a part of the program. This also assists in getting post graduate survey material to each alumnus.

## **WITHDRAWAL**

A student who wishes to withdraw from the health information management program is recommended to have an exit interview with the program coordinator. It is recommended that the student attempt to withdraw from the program on good terms; this may facilitate readmission at a later time. If a student wishes to withdraw from a specific course, the student must abide by the dates given in the class schedule for that particular semester.

## COUNSELING

### Availability

A counseling staff is provided by Montgomery College for student advisement. This staff provides services such as academic counseling, testing, advising, and personal counseling. Other counseling needs may be satisfied by the faculty or the appropriate resources will be recommended. **NOTE: For students in the HIM and Coding Programs, the primary counselor is the Program Coordinator. HIM and Coding Students should bring academic issues to the Program Coordinator.**

### Policy

Students are encouraged to use the resources available to meet their needs. Students will be referred to counselors according to the needs demonstrated. Students are also encouraged to consult frequently with both professional practice and classroom faculty regarding any deficiencies to minimize future problems. Documentation of counseling sessions is left to the discretion of the faculty member.

## ACADEMIC POLICIES FOR HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Health Information Management is a profession where standards must be maintained which are high enough to insure the effectiveness and competency of our graduates. Currently, the Program grading system is listed below and may be different from what you have experienced previously.

<u>Number Grade</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
92 - 100	A
84 - 91	B
78 - 83	C
65 - 77	D
0 - 64	F

Students must maintain a grade of 'C' (78%) or better in all Health Information Management courses to be considered in good standing in the program and eligible to advance to the next semester. Students not meeting the above minimum requirements may not be allowed to continue taking Health Information Management courses. Since the courses are usually offered only once a year, students can continue with courses other than those in Health Information Management in the curriculum and can apply for readmission into the program the following year, completing satisfactorily the course in which their deficiency occurred.

## **TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING**

Health Information Management students will be responsible for providing their own transportation to all facilities used for their educational experiences, including clinical affiliates.

Parking is provided at Montgomery College in the Parking Garages. Upon admission to the College, a parking permit must be obtained and displayed on the student's car. This permits the student to use the parking facilities. Some street parking is available and the student is urged to check posted signs for street parking. Any violations will be the student's responsibility. Parking permit procedures are outlined at <http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/parking.html>

At the professional practice affiliates, the parking facilities and regulations will vary. The student is responsible for all fees and for becoming familiar with the individual institution's guidelines while in the institution prior to first professional practice day. Public transportation is available for commuting to most of the institutions involved with the program.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

If Montgomery College closes due to snow or ice, an announcement will be made as early as possible on the local TV and radio stations\*. If an announcement concerning closing is not made before a student must leave for the college or their professional practice affiliate, then the student must use good judgment in making a decision as to whether or not to attend. If the student does not attend when the College is open and operating normally, then the day is an unexcused absence and must be made up. Evening class cancellation is handled in the same manner. When the College is closed, professional practice is also canceled. If the College closes during the day, students will be dismissed from the College or the professional practice areas.

## **ACADEMIC RESTRICTIONS**

Details of College academic restrictions may be found in the catalog, but restrictions which apply to the Health Information Management Program include the following:

Students will not be allowed to continue in the program under the following conditions:

1. If the student's Health Information Management final course grades falls below a "C" and the only remaining courses are sequential to that course.
2. The behavior or conduct of the student with regard to medical ethics at the professional practice affiliate or at Montgomery College is not appropriate for a Health Science professional.

## **CHEATING**

Copying answers to an examination, assignment, project or discussion board from another student's work or from a hidden source is considered to be cheating. Sharing information on the examination is also cheating. Any type of cheating is serious and detrimental to the student. The following consequences may be applied to a cheating incident:

1. A student found cheating will receive a zero on the examination, assignment or project. Students assisting another student in cheating will also receive a zero on the examination, assignment or project.
2. A student found cheating will receive a failing grade for the course and be required to repeat the course. Students assisting another student in cheating will receive a failing grade for the course and be required to repeat the course.
3. A student found cheating will be removed from the Health Information Management or Coding Certificate Programs. Students assisting another student in cheating will be removed from the Health Information Management or Coding Certificate Programs.

Montgomery College policies related to cheating may be reviewed in the Student Code of Conduct [http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/EDU/Plain.aspx?id=2074#student\\_code\\_of\\_conduct](http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/EDU/Plain.aspx?id=2074#student_code_of_conduct)

## **PLAGIARISM**

Unauthorized duplication or collaboration of any graded work (exams, laboratory exercises, assignments, projects, etc.) in any way or form (verbal, visual, physical, etc.) shall constitute plagiarism. Each student is expected to submit or present his or her original work, except in instances where group work is permitted. Duplication of images or films not taken by the student, but submitted as an original work shall also be considered as plagiarism. Student exams and lab exercises are considered Program property and will be kept in the student's permanent folder. Students have access to submitted exams and assignments for review, but are not permitted to copy the exams and the assignments in any format.

## **CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE**

The Health Information Management and Coding Certificate Programs are online and evening programs with minimal or no on-campus classes. Students are expected to adhere to instructor requirements for online and classroom attendance as outlined in the course syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to communicate attendance issues to the instructor and HIM Program Coordinator in a timely manner.

## **APPEALS PROCESS**

From time to time students will have concerns regarding things like residency status, tuition, financial aid, and academic matters. It is necessary to refer to the Catalog or the Academic Regulations section of the current Montgomery College Student Handbook for the appeals process for each specific area of interest.

## PROFESSIONALISM

Health Information Management and Coding Certificate Program students are expected to conduct themselves with respect and professionalism in classes, attending association meetings as a representative of Montgomery College, interacting with classmates, and when resolving academic issues with faculty. Class issues should be taken to the instructor and/or the HIM Coordinator or Clinical Coordinator. If the problem is not resolved by the HIM Program or Clinical Coordinators, appropriate chain-of-command as outlined in the Montgomery College Student Handbook should be followed. Disrespectful and unprofessional behavior toward classmates and faculty may be cause for expulsion from the HIM and/or Coding Programs.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarship information is available in the Catalog. Specific information regarding the American/District of Columbia/Maryland Health Information Management Associations Scholarships are available through the Program Coordinator.

## FINANCIAL AID

It is the philosophy of the College that no student should be restricted from attending this institution because of limited financial resources. Specific information about the financial aid program at the College is available online at <http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/edu/tuition.aspx?urlid=10>. Students encountering financial hardship that impacts their ability to continue in the HIM or Coding Programs should meet with the Program Coordinator as soon as possible to discuss financial options available.

## HEALTH INFORMATION AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Graduates in the Health Information Management Program are eligible for an award, which is given annually. The criteria for this award are:

1. Be a Health Information student in the degree program who will have completed all didactic course work by the end of the semester in which the award is granted. At least thirty credits will have been completed at Montgomery College.
2. Have a minimum cumulative equality point average of 3.0.
3. Have a minimum cumulative equality point average in the Health Information courses of 3.5.
4. Be someone who would be recommended without qualifications by the program faculty for a health information position.
5. Be selected by the health information faculty using the following criteria:
  - a. Demonstrates respect and concern for others,
  - b. Interacts professionally with peers and instructors, and
  - c. Demonstrates maturity of judgment.

## CODING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Graduates in the Abstractor/Coder/Biller Certificate Program are eligible for an award, which is given annually. The criteria for this award are:

1. Be a Coding Certificate student who will have completed all didactic course work by the end of the semester in which the award is granted. At least seventeen credits will have been completed at Montgomery College.
2. Have a minimum cumulative equality point average of 3.0.
3. Have a minimum cumulative equality point average in the Health Information courses of 3.5.
4. Be someone who would be recommended without qualifications by the program faculty for a coder/abstractor/biller position.
5. Be selected by the health information faculty using the following criteria:
  - a. Demonstrates respect and concern for others,
  - b. Interacts professionally with peers and instructors, and
  - c. Demonstrates maturity of judgment.

## HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT DEGREE CURRICULUM (67 credit hours)

### General Education and Other Requirements (26 credit hours)

BIOL 130	The Human Body	3
BIOL 131	The Human Body Lab	1
BIOL 150 or BIOL 101	Principles of Biology I or General Biology	4
CMAP 120	Introduction to Computer Applications	3
ENGL 101	Techniques of Reading and Writing	3
ENGL 102	English Foundation	3
MATH 110 Or MATH 117	Survey of College Mathematics or Elements of Statistics	3
COMM 108 Or COM 112	Introduction to Human Communications or Business and Professional Speech Communications	3
	Behavioral and Social Sciences Distribution	3

### Health Information Management Requirements (41 credit hours)

HINM 115	Medical Terminology I	2
HINM 116	Medical Terminology II	2
HINM 120	Concepts of Disease	3
HINM 134	Healthcare Delivery Systems	3
HINM 144	Health Data Content, Structure and Standards	3
HINM 150	Introduction to Pharmacology	1
HINM 154	Legal and Ethical Issues in Health Information Management	2
HINM 155	CPT Coding	2
HINM 165	ICD-10 Coding	4
HINM 180	Health Data Management	4
HINM 190	Supervision of Health Information Services	3
HINM 200	Professional Practice Experience I	1
HINM 220	Advanced Coding and Clinical Documentation Improvement	3
HINM 225	Ambulatory Coding	2
HINM 230	Revenue Cycle and Reimbursement Management	2
HINM 271	Professional Practice Experience II	2
HINM 272	Professional Practice Experience III	1
HINM 280	Research in Health Information Management	1

### Program Minimum Admission Requirements:

- ENGL 101
- MATH110 or MATH 117
- 2.50 GPA



**MEDICAL CODER/ABSTRACTOR/BILLER CERTIFICATE CURRICULUM  
 (31 credit hours)**

General Education and Other Requirements (7 credit hours)

BIOL 130	The Human Body	3
BIOL 131	The Human Body Lab	1
ENGL 101	Techniques of Reading and Writing	3

Coding Certificate Program Requirements (24 credit hours)

HINM 115	Medical Terminology I	2
HINM 116	Medical Terminology II	2
HINM 120	Concepts of Disease	3
HINM 134	Healthcare Delivery Systems	3
HINM 150	Introduction to Pharmacology	1
HINM 155	CPT Coding	2
HINM 165	ICD-10 Coding	4
HINM 220	Advanced Coding and Clinical Documentation Improvement	3
HINM 225	Ambulatory Coding	2
HINM 230	Revenue Cycle and Reimbursement Management	2

Program Minimum Admission Requirements:

- ENGL 101
- MATH110 assessment level
- 2.50 GPA

## HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND CODING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM COMPLETION

Students need to complete the HINM designated courses within three years of graduation or they will be expected to pass a competency test in current course content or repeat the course. A suggested course sequence for full-time students (3-semester per year) will be designed for each student by the Program Coordinator shortly after the Program Orientation meeting. Students are responsible for following their individual Program Completion Plan. Deviation from the Plan should be discussed with the Program Coordinator as soon as possible, as deviation from the plan may result in a delay in graduation.

### ENROLLMENT STATUS

Students with previously demonstrated competence in college level courses or students with satisfactory scores on Math and English Assessments may be able to complete the curriculum as listed as a full-time student. Other students with less satisfactory performance or scores may be advised to take more than two years to complete the program, perhaps on a part-time basis.

In either case, all HINM courses need to be taken concurrently and in sequential order. Any exception to this is left to the discretion of the program coordinator. Any decision would be based on the individual circumstances and performance in current or past courses, including GPA. All HINM courses must be completed within three years of graduation or student must pass a competency test in current course content or retake the course.

### GRADUATION

To qualify as a candidate for the degree of Associate in Applied Science in Health Information Management, a student must have earned the following:

1. A minimum of 67 semester hours of academic credit which must include all courses required in the curriculum elected by the student or such alternative courses as are specifically required by the college or university to which the student will transfer.
2. A minimum grade of "C" (2.0) in all Health Information Management courses.
3. An overall GPA of 2.0 or higher.
4. Settle all financial obligations to Montgomery College. The general obligations of the candidate are published in the academic regulations.

All second-year students who are planning to graduate should complete a "graduation check" (report of qualification) for graduation with the registrar during the fall semester.

## CAMPUS RESOURCES

A full list of Learning Centers at all Montgomery College Campuses is available at <http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/learningcenters/>

### Resource Center and Medical Learning Center (HC 226)

Instructional media of various types are available in the Takoma Park Resource Center and the Medical Learning Center in the Health Science building. Audiovisual reinforcement materials are available as Health Information management courses frequently require a number of such aids to clarify, reinforce and expand understanding of course material. Textbooks on health information are available at these locations. Students are encouraged to contact their instructor to request access to or help with locating additional resource materials.

### Science and Math Learning Center (SN 101):

Student tutors assist individual students with specific mathematical problems, on a walk-in basis. Upon request, audio and video materials can be supplied for reviewing or acquiring math skills.

The Science Learning Center provides reinforcing activities for the physical and biological sciences. The activities incorporate the use of filmstrips throughout the semester on such topics like the utilization of science texts, adequate note-taking techniques and the improvement of study skills.

### Student Development Counselor and Academic Advising:

Counseling is an integral part of Montgomery College. The College offers a comprehensive program of student services designed to complement other educational offerings and to assist students with the many challenges confronting them as they enter and progress through college. Student development counselors are available to assist students with academic resources and educational planning (including transfer information), career planning (including resume writing, job search, etc.), interpretation of college policies and identification referral to (necessary) campus and community resources. Once a student has been admitted into the HIM program, HIM faculty will advise the student in his or her designated curriculum (track).

### Impact Tutoring:

Students may receive regular, one-on-one tutoring in their academic studies. Computer and word processing software are available to students interested in typing their assignments such as term papers, case studies or resumes.

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE

**POLICY:** A student representative shall be selected from each class to serve on the Health Information Management Advisory Committee.

**PROCEDURE:** The HIM Advisory Committee consists of individuals from various aspects of the field (administrators, faculty, students, etc.) who share an interest in the advancement and development of the HIM Program. Advisory meetings are held at least once a year. The business of the committee is to review ongoing program operations and provide recommendations for

change or improvement. Since any change in the Program eventually affects the students, student representation at these meeting is important.

## **HEALTH POLICIES**

Health Information Management students are required to have a physical examination, which includes a two-step TB (Mantoux) test, current (seasonal) Influenza vaccination, and several other tests to include a medical history. Professional Practice Experience (PPE) packets to include health/physical forms will be distributed for completion several months prior to the start of HINM200 (PPE 1).

## **HEALTH AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE**

In the case of accidents or illnesses which occur during school hours, the following policies will apply. If a student becomes ill or injured while on duty, he/she should report to the clinical coordinator or designate. If injury is job related, an incident report should be filed and a copy, if possible, should be sent to the Program Coordinator. The student will be financially responsible for his/her treatment. Students are responsible for securing health insurance to cover any accidents occurring during professional practice. If the student does not have coverage, any financial responsibility for treatment will be the student's own. Please note that the accident coverage is not the same as the college-provided liability insurance, which will be explained below.

### **HEALTH INSURANCE REQUIREMENT FOR HEALTH SCIENCE STUDENTS:**

1. The clinical experience is a part of the requirements of (many) of the Health Sciences curricula of study;
2. Students must meet the various requirements of each clinical site in order to utilize that site for the student' clinical experience (the College does not control these requirements);
3. Most sites are requiring that students carry personal health insurance.

Accordingly, the College cannot guarantee that the student will be able to complete the clinical experience requirements unless the student has his/her own personal health insurance.

## **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK**

All students in PPE must submit to a criminal background check before attending their first PPE. This is the responsibility of the student and instructions for completing the criminal background check will be outlined in the PPE packet.

## **DRUG SCREENING**

All students in PPE must submit to a drug screening/test before attending their first PPE. This is the responsibility of the student and instructions for completing the drug screening process will be outlined in the PPE packet.

## **LIABILITY (MALPRACTICE) INSURANCE**

As a student, you are responsible for your actions in your contact with patients and others at your PPE affiliate. As a result of this, you are covered by liability insurance through Montgomery College at no cost to you. This covers incidents involving possible negligence in patient care. All accidents that occur while on PPE assignments, resulting in patient, hospital personnel or personal injury and/or damage to equipment, must be reported immediately to the PPE supervisor and clinical coordinator. An incident report must be written to document what took place and if possible, a copy should be forwarded to the College.

## **POLICIES CONCERNING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCE EDUCATION**

Your PPE education, which will start in the third semester, will be much different than the traditional classroom instruction that you have been used to. The affiliated clinics and hospitals provide a set number of hours of instruction to each student on a one-on-one basis. This instruction process should not have any negative implications on patient care. Since many factors together constitute a very different situation than a classroom education, a much more structured set of rules and regulations are necessary to ensure the smooth functioning and effectiveness of the PPE courses. Montgomery College has a uniform written agreement in effect with all of our affiliated hospitals, and close cooperation between the College and hospital coordinators is vital to the success of the program. The student's part in ensuring the effectiveness of the PPE portion of the program is to have a good understanding of the educational philosophy of "hands on" PPE training, a thorough knowledge of the pertinent rules, and a commitment to follow rules and procedures. The following sections of the handbook represent the regulations and policies for the PPE education of students in the HIM program at Montgomery College. These regulations and policies will apply to all HIM students in the program.

## **PPE ASSIGNMENT**

Students enrolled in the Montgomery College Health Information Management program may be scheduled and rotated through the various PPE affiliations by the clinical coordinator in consultation and agreement with the PPE affiliates. If a student has any conflicts or problems at a PPE site, and desires to change hospitals, a full written explanation of why they consider the change necessary, must be submitted to the clinical coordinator. It will be left to the discretion of the clinical and program coordinators to make such a change. If a student is terminated and asked not to return to a PPE site for violation of the established rules and regulations, the student may not be eligible for readmission into the Health Information Management program, and it is possible that other PPE affiliates will deny placement of that student. Any student having a problem with the Clinical Coordinator, Supervisor, or Employee may ask for a conference, and the College Instructor should be informed. A conference date may then be arranged with the student, College Instructor, and/or appropriate clinical personnel.

## **FINANCIAL REMUNERATION (STIPENDS)**

Students are not to be substituted for paid staff. Students may not take the responsibility or the place of "qualified" staff. However, after demonstrating proficiency, students may be permitted to perform procedures with careful supervision. Students may be employed in the PPE facility outside regular education hours provided the work is limited so it does not interfere with regular academic responsibilities. The work must be non-compulsory, paid and subject to employee regulations.

## **PPE ATTENDANCE**

It is necessary to meet the number of PPE hours in order to meet guidelines of the Program in providing the student with a variety of examinations to demonstrate competency in essential procedures. Daily log sheets will be completed for each day at the PPE affiliate and will be used as part of the student's grade. It is the student's responsibility to complete the daily PPE log. The student should become familiar with the following guidelines:

1. There will be no unexcused absences on PPE days due to importance of the PPE experience.
2. Emergency or serious situations will be recognized as excused absences. These may be: personal illness, court appearances, or death in the immediate family (parents, grandparents, or siblings). Proof of the excused absence must be submitted when appropriate. For example, absences of two (2) or more days for reasons of illness would require a physician's statement regarding student's capability to resume PPE assignment.
3. The student must call and notify the PPE site manager at their PPE site if for any reason he/she cannot report for PPE or cannot report on time. The student should also notify the PPE Instructor via email and/or phone of such absence.
4. Leave (sick) days or excused absences in PPE areas are permitted according to the following guideline: No more than 2 occasions per semester will be considered acceptable. Of note, effort should be made at making up missed PPE days (if the site can accommodate the student).

5. Attendance is monitored and documented as previously mentioned. Unexcused absences or excused absences over the permitted amount of leave days may be made up before the end of the semester (depending on site availability). This time will be made up at the convenience of the facility, not the student. If the facility is unable to reschedule a missed day, the student's grade will reflect the decreased time spent in PPE. It is expected that students will report on time to the clinical site. "On time" means the student reports to his/her site manager (or designee), ready to work, at least five (5) minutes before his/her scheduled reporting time. This is a very important practice and quality to develop to become a professional. Violations may necessitate Student-Faculty (and/or Clinical Coordinator) Conferences to be initiated. If a student is tardy 3 times, it will be counted as 1 unexcused absence. Habitual tardiness, absenteeism and unpreparedness will result in removal from the PPE facility and a recommendation for expulsion from the Health Information Management program.
6. Students can be allowed the same time as staff for breaks and lunch at their PPE site. This is left to the discretion of the PPE Site Manager. Students are reminded they are not a facility employee. Students are visitors in the HIM department and should behave with humility and respect for the managers and employees in the facility.
7. Students must receive permission from the Clinical Coordinator to take a course which may interfere with Health Information Management PPE course hours. Generally speaking, the only situation in which this will be allowed is that in which the student is in the last (PPE) semester, and failure to finish the course will result in not graduating with the class. Good attendance and consistent promptness are important attributes for HIM students to develop. You will be graded on your performance in this respect by the Health Information Professional with whom you work. A good, reliable HIM student will be hired in preference to a brilliant, unreliable one every time!

## **STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY**

Students are required to comply with all school regulations as outlined during the orientation session. Students are required to act in a manner that will reflect positively on themselves, the school and the profession for which they are being educated. Infraction of any one regulation will result in a verbal warning. A repeat violation will result in a written warning, which will be placed in the student's file. If the student is having difficulty practically, this is documented via evaluations. A discussion with the Instructor and the HIM Program Coordinator will be held to review the evaluation with the student. If a problem persists the student will be notified again. The student will be counseled regarding the situation and be required to sign a documentation form, which outlines a summary of the counseling received for the deficiencies. Failure to comply will possibly result in a counseling session with the Dean of Students, Clinical PPE Instructor and the Program Coordinator. After reviewing all documentation, the persons listed above will determine recommendations and follow-up. The student will be notified and either be given another chance to continue in the HIM Program or be recommended for dismissal from the HIM Program.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

Rules and regulations concerning conduct to be observed by all students are not limited to the following listings (see Appendix A, AHIMA Code of Ethics). Students are expected to behave in a professional and ethical manner at all times.

### A STUDENT SHALL NOT:

1. Mistreat patients or PPE site staff in any manner.
2. Be absent or tardy, fail to notify the PPE Instructor of absence or lateness prior to assigned starting time.
3. Loiter on PPE site premises outside the health information department or other unauthorized places.
4. Misuse confidential information or falsify information, records and reports.
5. Exhibit insubordination - immoral conduct, indecency, or refusal to follow instruction from those designated managers.
6. Willfully damage or destroy or misuse PPE site property.
7. Steal or be in unauthorized possession of PPE site or another person's personal property.
8. Create or contribute to unsanitary conditions on PPE site premises.
9. Intimidate or coerce another student or site employee through physical or verbal threats.
10. Engage in soliciting on PPE site grounds.
11. Montgomery College is a smoke-free campus; PPE sites are an extension of Montgomery College. Smoking at PPE sites is also prohibited.
12. Be in possession of a weapon of any kind while on PPE site premises.
13. Engage in excessive talking, laughing, and other disturbances not appropriate in the hallway, around patients, or on PPE site premises.
14. Fail to report any accident or injury involving student, patients, other PPE site employees, or visitors.
15. Be inebriated, drinking, or have possession of drugs and/or alcohol on PPE site premises.
16. Leave the clinical area early without prior permission of the Clinical Site Manager.
17. Sleep or loiter on PPE time.



The faculty expects the Health Information Management students to abide by the specific PPE Affiliates policy of conduct. A student will be subject to disciplinary action\* if violations of any kind occur.

**Note:** Each Clinical Affiliate reserves the right to refuse a student admission into the facility resulting from violation.

## **PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

The personal appearance and demeanor of Health Information Management students at Montgomery College reflect the standards of the Profession, the College, and the Program and are indicative of the students' interest and pride in their chosen profession. Students will abide by the rules of the PPE site regarding special instructions on attire.

Montgomery College HIM Students are expected to report to PPE sites in clean casual business attire. Professional conduct requires that the student attend to personal hygiene and be clean and groomed. Students are responsible for checking dress code at the facility prior to their first day.

## **PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

In the didactic portion of the program, evaluation of performance will be accomplished as described in the course syllabi and according to College policies. In the PPE areas, the course syllabi will describe the more complex evaluation procedures. Depending on the semester involved, part of the student's grades may come from behavioral objective type competency examinations and assignments and part from formal evaluations which are completed by the site managers. Student performance evaluation is based upon specified levels of technical and professional competency and provides an opportunity for guidance and assistance when student improvement is deemed necessary

## **LEAVING ASSIGNED AREA / VISITING PATIENTS OR OTHER EMPLOYEES**

Students shall not leave the PPE area without the permission of the clinical site manager. Students are not allowed to visit patients or other employees during scheduled PPE hours unless approved by the Site Manager.

## **CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

All hospital and patient records are confidential in nature. Requests for information concerning a patient should be referred to the Clinical Site Manager or designee. Students are expected to maintain the confidentiality of patients in a professional manner.

## **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

The students are asked not to bring personal property of excessive value to the PPE site (especially during PPEs) such as credit cards, jewelry, excess cash, etc. The student is responsible for any missing personal items. Consult your specific PPE site for any arrangement for storing belongings.

## **PERSONAL TELEPHONE CALLS**

Personal telephone calls or texting while at the clinical site are not allowed. Only emergency calls can be received by students. Students are required to put their cell phones and on silent while in the PPE site.

## **EATING AND SMOKING**

Students shall not eat, drink, or smoke while on duty except in assigned areas and at designated times.

## **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

The Health Information Management Faculty at Montgomery College encourage student participation in professional activities and organizations. These tools enhance learning experiences. In view of this, it is required that each student join the American Health Information Management Association as a student member. The AHIMA promotes student participation by offering a special membership fee. Paper applications may be obtained from the AHIMA website or completed online at the AHIMA website.

## Appendix A

### AHIMA Code of Ethics

*American Health Information Management Association Code of Ethics*

[http://library.ahima.org/xpedio/groups/public/documents/ahima/bok1\\_024277.hcsp?dDocName=bok1\\_024277](http://library.ahima.org/xpedio/groups/public/documents/ahima/bok1_024277.hcsp?dDocName=bok1_024277)

## Appendix B

**Domains, Subdomains and Tasks for a Health Information Technician**

<http://www.ahima.org/certification/RHIT>

## Appendix C

**CAHIIM Standards and Interpretations for Accreditation of Associate Degree Programs in Health Information Management**

<http://cahiim.org/him/curriculumrequirements.html>