



## **Health Information Technology Program**

Student Handbook and Clinical Handbook  
Pierpont Community and Technical College  
School of Health Sciences

PIERPONT MISSION: “To provide accessible, responsive, comprehensive education that works.” *“Education That Works.”*

PIERPONT VISION: “To empower individuals and strengthen communities through exceptional training and educational pathways.”

# **Health Information Technology Student Handbook**

## **Table of Contents**

### **Welcome**

- Welcome
- Introduction
- Goal
- Mission
- Accreditation
- Dynamic Career Opportunities
- Job Prospects
- Program Goals
- Program Outcomes and Assessments
- Admission to the program
- Health Examination
- Essential Functions
- Model Curriculum
- Costs Associated with the Program
- Computer System Requirements
- Disability Guidelines
- College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)
- Credit for Credentials

### **Program Policies and Procedures**

- Withdrawal from the Program
- Academic Dismissal from the Program
- Readmission to the Program
- Advisory System
- Grading System
- Late Work
- Attendance Policy
- Classroom Policies
- Email/Blackboard
- Academic Integrity
- Academic Dishonesty Policy
- Process to initiate a charge of academic dishonesty
- Graduation audit
- Copyright law
- Study Habits

### **Associations and Memberships**

- American Health information Management Association (AHIMA)
- AHIMA Student membership

Top 10 Reasons for Becoming a AHIMA student member  
West Virginia Health Information Management Association (WVHIMA)

### **Clinical Practicum**

Clinical Hours Waivers  
Clinical Requirements  
Dress Code  
Student Conduct  
Confidentiality Policy  
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)  
Transportation

### **National Examination for the RHIT**

#### **Insurance**

Liability  
Health

#### **HIT Student Awards**

Pierpont Outstanding Health Information Technology Student  
West Virginia Health Information Management Association (WVHIMA)  
Academic Achievement Award

### **Summary**

### **Faculty Information**

#### **Forms**

Handbook Acknowledgement  
Release of Information  
Confidentiality Attestation  
Release for photos  
Leave of absence request form  
Clinical hour waiver  
Coordination of Clinical Practicum  
Essential Functions

## WELCOME

Welcome to the fascinating world of Health information management (HIM). Health information management is the practice of acquiring, analyzing, and protecting digital and traditional medical information vital to providing quality patient care. HIM professionals are highly trained in the latest information management technology applications and understand the workflow in any healthcare provider organization from large hospital systems to the private physician practice. They are vital to the daily operations management of health information and electronic health records.

Health information management professionals work in a variety of different settings and job titles. They often serve in bridge roles, connecting clinical, operational, and administrative functions. These professionals affect the quality of patient information and patient care at every touch point in the healthcare delivery cycle. Having skilled HIM professionals on staff ensures an organization has the right information on hand when and where it is needed while maintaining the highest standards of data integrity, confidentiality, and security.

Health information technology refers to the framework used to manage health information, and the exchange of health information in a digital/paper format. Professionals who work in health IT are focused on the technical side of managing health information, working with software and hardware used to manage and store patient data.

## INTRODUCTION

In the healthcare industry, ongoing advancements in medical science, legislative reforms, and increased computerization have contributed to a growing need for information professionals with the knowledge and skills to process, analyze, and manage healthcare data effectively. Employment of health information technicians is projected to grow by 13 percent from 2016 to 2026, a rate faster than the average for all occupations. This growth is driven in part by an aging population, which is expected to require increased medical services, including diagnostic testing, treatment, and procedural care. As a result, there will be a corresponding rise in insurance reimbursement claims and healthcare documentation. In addition, the widespread adoption of electronic health records (EHRs) across healthcare settings has further increased the demand for professionals who can accurately organize, maintain, and manage patient information.

The two-year Health Information Technology (HIT) Associate of Applied Science degree program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM). Graduates of the program are eligible and encouraged to sit for the Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT) certification examination. The RHIT credential demonstrates a strong educational foundation and a commitment to maintaining professional competence in a rapidly evolving healthcare environment.

Students enrolled in the HIT program also have the opportunity to complete HLIN 1112 Introduction to Medical Administrative Assistant, earning the Medical Administrative Assistant Advanced Skill Set. This skill set represents the first semester of the program's model curriculum and also qualifies graduates to pursue the Certified Medical Administrative Assistant (CMAA) certification through the National Healthcare Association.

## GOAL

The goal of the Health Information Technology Program at Pierpont Community and Technical College is to provide students with a comprehensive course of study that integrates both foundational knowledge and technical skills necessary for entry into the profession. The program offers a well-rounded educational experience by combining general education with career-focused technical training across the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains.

## MISSION

The program's mission is to prepare competent, innovative, and engaged professionals who can effectively identify, evaluate, and utilize a variety of information resources and technologies to meet the demands of diverse healthcare practice environments.

## ACCREDITATION

The Health Information Technology Program is administered under the guidance of the American Health Information Management Association in cooperation with the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education. The program maintains accreditation through these organizations, ensuring adherence to established standards of quality and professional practice in health information management education.



## DYNAMIC CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The continuously evolving landscape of healthcare regulations and technologies supports lifelong learning and ongoing professional development. As the Health Information Management (HIM) industry advances, health information plays a vital role in providing the data necessary to effectively navigate these changes. Consequently, health information professionals are expected to remain in high demand as the healthcare sector continues to expand. Opportunities are increasing across all levels of education and credentialing, with approximately 30,000 new positions anticipated by 2026.

Industries experiencing increased demand for health information professionals include academic institutions, consulting firms, government agencies, and healthcare software companies. As health information technology (HIT) becomes more widespread, these professionals will remain essential to the electronic health record (EHR) workforce.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the field is expected to expand to include emerging roles such as mobile adoption support specialists, public health informatics professionals, implementation support specialists, and information management redesign specialists.

## JOB PROSPECTS

Prospects are strongest for individuals who obtain certification in health information, such as the Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT). As electronic health record (EHR) systems continue to expand across healthcare settings, there is an increasing demand for health information technicians with strong technical and computer skills to manage and utilize these systems effectively.

Health records are integral to all aspects of healthcare planning and delivery. Their primary purpose is to support the assessment, planning, and coordination of patient care. The health record contains comprehensive documentation, including the patient's medical history, physical examination findings, diagnostic test results, and detailed notes regarding treatment and clinical progress.

The health record also serves as a critical communication tool among members of the healthcare team, including physicians, nurses, laboratory personnel, therapists, and other allied health professionals. Accurate and timely documentation promotes continuity of care, facilitates clinical decision-making, and supports quality patient outcomes. In addition, the health record safeguards the legal and financial interests of the patient, the healthcare organization, and the providers responsible for delivering care.

Health Information Management (HIM) professionals play a vital role in maintaining integrity, accuracy, and security of health records throughout their lifecycle. Common positions within the HIM field include Health Information Technician, Registered Health Information Administrator (RHIA), Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT), Medical Coder, Clinical Documentation Improvement (CDI) Specialist, Release of Information (ROI) Specialist, Data Quality Analyst, Privacy and Security Officer, and Health Information Manager. These professionals ensure compliance with regulatory standards, support data governance initiatives, and contribute to the effective use of health information in patient care, reimbursement, research, and organizational decision-making.

Students enrolled in the Health Information Technology (HIT) Program are prepared with entry-level competencies required for practice in the field. Upon successful completion of the program, students are awarded an Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree. Graduates who complete all required coursework are eligible to sit for the national certification examination for the Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT), administered by American Health Information Management Association. Early testing is available, allowing students to take the examination during their final semester.

As part of the HLIN 2995 course requirement, all students are required to register and pay for the RHIT examination (available through the financial aid RHIT bundle). A copy of the payment receipt must be submitted to the Program Coordinator prior to receiving course credit. Failure to submit the receipt will result in a grade of "Incomplete" until documentation is provided.

## PROGRAM GOALS

Upon successful completion of the Health Information Technology Program, the graduate is expected to:

1. Collect, maintain, and analyze health data structure and content and be familiar with healthcare data standards and requirements.
2. Apply and validate clinical classification systems and support reimbursement methodologies.
3. Collect, organize, and present healthcare statistics.
4. Participate and comply in quality assessment and performance issues, and healthcare delivery systems.
5. Implement, maintain, and demonstrate healthcare compliance, confidentiality, ethical, legal and privacy issues.
6. Utilize and protect health information and communication technologies.
7. Design, maintain, and utilize health data, storage, security, and retrieval.
8. Develop, apply, and participate in human resource management, and financial and physical resources.
9. Demonstrate professional behavior through attendance, promptness, and ability to assume appropriate responsibility.

## PROGRAM OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

Graduate Outcomes (Student Learning Outcomes)	Direct Measures of Assessment	Satisfactory Performance Standard
Graduates will demonstrate at least the AHIMA entry-level curriculum competencies	HLIN 2995 Capstone mock RHIT examination	Students must achieve a score of $\geq 70$ to be considered a passing grade
	Student course averages for HLIN courses	Students will attain an average score of $\geq 75\%$ in each HLIN course
	Professional Practice Experience (PPE) clinical supervisors attribute assessment	Eighty percent (80%) of students obtain a "C" or higher on Section IV: Competencies on the Professional Practice Experience (PPE) evaluation form by the clinical site supervisor
Communicate verbally and nonverbally with physicians, health care delivery personnel and peers in an effective, appropriate and capable manner	HLIN 2995 Capstone course project	Score at least 2-Fair on the grading rubrics for the project in the capstone course
	Professional Practice Experience (PPE) clinical supervisors attribute assessment	Students must attain a score of $\geq 30$ on Sections I, and II on the Professional Practice Experience evaluation form.
Demonstrate professional behavior that reflects appropriate responsibility and professional standards that are legal, confidential, and ethical.	HLIN 2995 Capstone final grading rubric	Students must score at least a 2-Fair in Professional Behavior on the final grading rubric for the capstone course
	HLIN 2203 Quality Assessment project	Students must individually score a $\geq 75$ on the grading rubric for the group project evaluation including participation points
Collect, maintain, and analyze health data structure and content and be familiar with healthcare data standards and requirements.	HLIN 1110 Legal Aspects of Health Information - Students must review a subpoena and determine if the subpoena is valid	Using the textbook criteria, the student must correctly determine $\geq 75\%$ (4/5 subpoenas)
	HLIN 1110 Legal Aspects of Health Information - Students must create a consent for medical treatment form using the AMA criteria	The student should score a $\geq 45$ (C) out of a possible 60 points using the grading rubric

### ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

Admission to the AAS HIT Program is based upon available space. To be considered for admission, applicants must:

Apply to Pierpont Community and Technical College and meet the general admission requirements of Pierpont Community and Technical College. On the application indicate Health Information Technology as your major of choice. If you are a current student at Pierpont Community and Technical College, complete a change of major form and indicate Health Information Technology as your major of choice.

Students must complete each HLIN course with a grade of “C” or better, complete the support courses with a grade of “C” or better and maintain an overall 2.0 GPA to remain in the program. Students who receive a “D” or “F” in a course must repeat the course before continuing in the program’s course sequence. If students receive two such grades in the same course, they will be removed from the program.

Support Coursework for HIT:

ENGL 1104, 1108

OFAD 1150

MTH 1210

HLCA 1170

HLCA 1171

HLCA 1100

BIOY 1115

Exit Standards: To remain in and graduate from the HIT program, a student must earn overall cumulative GPA of 2.0. Any classes accepted as substitutes for curricular classes also require a grade of “C” or above. Students who receive a “D” or “F” in a course must repeat the course before continuing in the program’s course sequence. If students receive two such grades in the course must repeat the course before continuing in the program. If students receive two such grades in the same course, they will be removed from the program.

Completion of a national accreditation exam (RHIT) is not required; however, students are strongly encouraged to complete such an exam for marketability. We do require the students to pay and schedule for their RHIT exam as a requirement in our HLIN 2995 Capstone Course; however, that does not guarantee the students will pursue.

## HEALTH EXAMINATION

Students admitted to the program must arrange for a physical examination and submit the completed health examination form to the HIT Clinical Education Coordinator prior to the first day of their clinical practicums. Students should be in good general health as evaluated by a physician during a physical examination.

Appropriate vaccinations including a current tetanus toxoid, DPT, MMR, polio, varicella and Hepatitis B surface antigen vaccine series are required. A hepatitis antibody test demonstrating sufficient antibody titer to Hepatitis B surface antigen may be submitted in lieu of the Hepatitis B vaccine series. All students are required to have a test for Hepatitis B antibody titer performed six months after their final vaccination. Immune titers are

required for all vaccinations prior to start of clinical practicums. Most of our clinical affiliates require both the Flu vaccine and the Covid-19 vaccine.

### Purpose

The Health Information Technology (HIT) program prepares students for entry-level employment in health information management, coding, billing, compliance, and related healthcare data roles. Students admitted to the HIT program must be able to perform the essential functions listed below, with or without reasonable accommodation, to successfully complete academic and clinical requirements and to function effectively in professional practice.

### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement

The institution is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Students who believe they may need accommodation should contact the Office of Accessibility/Disability Services. Failure to meet the essential functions, with or without reasonable accommodation, may result in dismissal from the program.

#### Essential Functions of Health Information Technology Students

1. Gross Motor Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move safely within confined or office spaces</li> <li>• Sit and maintain balance for extended periods</li> <li>• Stand and maintain balance when required</li> <li>• Reach above shoulder level (e.g., accessing office materials or equipment)</li> <li>• Reach below waist level (e.g., connecting equipment or retrieving materials)</li> </ul>
2. Fine Motor Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick up and manipulate small objects</li> <li>• Write with a pen or pencil</li> <li>• Use a computer keyboard and mouse</li> <li>• Perform precise hand and finger movements for data entry and record management</li> </ul>
3. Physical Endurance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustain repetitive movements such as typing and data review</li> <li>• Maintain physical tolerance for extended periods of computer and desk work</li> </ul>
4. Physical Strength
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lift and carry light materials or equipment (approximately 10–25 pounds)</li> <li>• Push or pull light carts or equipment when required in clinical or office settings</li> </ul>
5. Mobility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bend, stoop, or squat as needed</li> <li>• Climb stairs or use stools/ladders if required in office or clinical environments</li> <li>• Move quickly in response to emergency situations if present in a healthcare setting</li> </ul>
6. Hearing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hear and respond to normal speaking levels</li> <li>• Hear auditory alerts such as alarms or announcements in clinical or office settings</li> </ul>
7. Visual Ability

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• View information on computer screens and printed materials</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinguish visual indicators such as color-coded alerts or data displays</li> </ul>
8. Olfactory Ability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detect environmental hazards such as smoke or gas when present in healthcare facilities</li> </ul>
9. Reading and Comprehension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and understand written materials such as policies, procedures, coding manuals, and health records</li> </ul>
10. Arithmetic and Quantitative Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform basic mathematical calculations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpret tables, charts, and graphs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use calculators and software tools to compute healthcare statistics and financial data</li> </ul>
11. Emotional and Professional Stability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate professional behavior and ethical judgment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt to changing environments and manage stress effectively</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain focus and manage multiple tasks simultaneously</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulate personal emotions and respond appropriately to challenging situations</li> </ul>
12. Analytical and Information Processing Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer knowledge between contexts</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze and interpret health information data</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize tasks and evaluate outcomes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use short-term and long-term memory effectively</li> </ul>
13. Critical Thinking Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify cause-and-effect relationships</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthesize information from multiple sources</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize and sequence information logically</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and support activities related to health information management functions</li> </ul>
14. Interpersonal Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate respectfully with faculty, peers, healthcare professionals, and staff</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish professional rapport with physicians, clinicians, and administrative personnel</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage and resolve interpersonal conflict appropriately</li> </ul>
15. Communication Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate clearly in verbal and written formats</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use telephone, email, and virtual communication tools</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide education or guidance related to documentation, coding, and compliance requirements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence and direct activities related to health information processes when appropriate</li> </ul>
16. Technological Competence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navigate electronic health record (EHR) systems and healthcare software applications</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use coding, billing, and data management software</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain data privacy, confidentiality, and security in accordance with HIPAA and institutional policies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt to emerging healthcare technologies and digital workflows</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating in virtual learning, telehealth, and remote work environments as required</li> </ul>

The curriculum (model schedule) has been structured so that each semester's courses build on the previous information learned. Course material is updated yearly depending on the federal government rules and regulations for electronic medical records, coding classifications and reimbursement schematics.

The catalog lists the curriculum for the HIT Program and is the one you will follow during your enrollment. There is also one included on the following page in this handbook.

The HIT curriculum offers students the opportunity to build stackable credentials. The curriculum was revised to offer this opportunity for students. At the completion of the first semester of the model curriculum; students can obtain the Medical Administrative Assistant Advanced Skill Set with the addition of HLIN 1112 Introduction to Medical Administrative Assistant. The students would then be eligible to sit for the Certified Medical Administrative Assistant national certification examination through the [National Healthcare Association \(NHA\)](#).

Students who successfully complete the first and second semester of the HIT program, would be eligible to sit for the Certified Billing and Coding Specialist national certification examination through the NHA.

Students who successfully complete semesters one through three of the HIT program, would be eligible to sit for the Certified Electronic Health Records Specialist (CEHRS) through the National Healthcare Association (NHA).

These stackable credentials support students who want to develop career skills. They also can benefit career choices and increase employment opportunities.

Model Schedule  
Health Information Technology  
63 hours

FRESHMAN FIRST SEMESTER

HLIN 1100	Fundamentals of Health Information	3
HLCA 1100	Medical Terminology	3
ENGL 1104	Written English I	3
HLCA 1170	Anatomy and Physiology Lecture	3

HLCA 1171	Anatomy and Physiology Lab	3
FRESHMAN SECOND SEMESTER		
HLIN 2202	Reimbursement Systems	3
HLIN 2204	Pharmacology	2
HLIN 2211	Diagnoses Medical Coding	3
HLIN 2213	Outpatient Procedural Coding	5
	Total	16 (17)

SOPHOMORE FIRST SEMESTER		
OFAD 1150	Computer Concepts and Applications	3
HLIN 1105	Computers in Healthcare	3
HLIN 1110	Legal Aspects of Health Information	3
HLIN 2212	Inpatient Procedural Medical Coding	2
HLIN 2206	Clinical Practicum I2206	2

SOPHOMORE SECOND SEMESTER				
ENGL 1108	Written English II	3		
HLIN 1109	Health Care Statistics	3		
HLIN 2203	Quality Assessment/Utilization Review	3		
HLIN 2207	Health Information Supervision	3		
HLIN 2208	Clinical Practicum II	2		
HLIN 2995	Health Information Technology Capstone	2		
	Total	16 (17)	Total Credits	61
	(63)			

## COMPUTER SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

### Hardware:

- 1Ghz Intel or AMD processor (minimum)
- 2GB of RAM (minimum)
- The Lab is best viewed at a screen resolution of 1024 x 768. Otherwise, you may experience clipping or pixilated content
- USB ports
- Firewall (Connecting to the lab requires that you have port 443 open. Please see your network administrator for assistance)

### Software:

- Windows XP, Vista, 7 & 8 are supported, as well as Mac OS, but each VLab program has different compatibility requirements (specific system information is provided to all users) Broadband High-Speed Internet Access, Cable or DS

- Internet Explorer 8 and above, Firefox and Google Chrome are supported
- Again, each program has different compatibilities. Some are universal while some will only work with IE 8; this information is provided to all users
- Java installed and browser-enabled

## DISABILITY GUIDELINES

Pierpont works closely with full- or part-time students to determine reasonable accommodations that will help students be successful in their schooling. Many students who were under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan during high school will qualify for services, as will many other students who might not have received specialized services during K-12. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Disability Services Office to discuss any disability that might interfere with the pursuit of their education and what type of documentation of the disability will be required. Approved accommodations are determined on an individual basis. Instructors are not required to allow any academic accommodations unless the student provides the instructor with a letter from the Office of Disability Services outlining the necessary accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to discuss the logistics of each accommodation with each instructor to arrange for the most feasible service provision. Students must provide their professors with a copy of their accommodation letter each semester to receive their accommodations. The accommodation letter will be given to the student after the student completes an intake with disability services. Appointments may be made by email to [access@pierpont.edu](mailto:access@pierpont.edu), by telephone (304) 5347878, or in person at the Advanced Technology Center, 500 Galliher Drive. Additional information may be found on the web [www.pierpont.edu](http://www.pierpont.edu) (click on Current Students on the top menu, then click on Student Services on the blue menu on the left, then click on Disability Services on the blue menu on the left).

Students should be aware:

1. The college does not assume responsibility for providing accommodations or services to students who have not identified themselves as having a qualifying disability.
2. It is the student's responsibility to voluntarily disclose information regarding the nature and extent of their qualifying disability to a representative of the Office of Disability Services.
3. It is also the student's responsibility to inform the faculty via letter from the Office of Disability Services, the necessary accommodations at the beginning of each semester to receive accommodations throughout the semester.
4. Students who encounter problems regarding accommodations should notify the Office of Disability Services immediately.

## COLLEGE LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM (CLEP)

The College offers opportunities for earning course credit by examination through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). General examinations are offered in five basic areas: English Composition, Natural Sciences, Mathematics, Social Science/History, and Humanities. In addition, subject examinations are given in many specific fields of study. Eligibility for CLEP examinations is open to all persons and not dependent upon

enrollment at Pierpont Community and Technical College. The exams may be scheduled through the Advanced Technology Center 304-367-4920.

### PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIO

The Health Information Technology Program recognizes and supports the validity of prior learning. Documented, authenticated, and demonstrated college-level learning outcomes will be assessed for credit. Credit will be awarded based on the method of prior learning demonstrated by the student. College-level learning is defined as demonstrated, measurable achievement of learning outcomes grounded in a current knowledge base which has conceptual or theoretical as well as a practical understanding applicable outside the specific job or context in which it was learned and evaluated by subject matter expert faculty (Hoffmann, 2012). Please see the HIT Program Coordinator for more information regarding the Portfolio process.

### CREDIT FOR CREDENTIALS

The Health Information Technology Program awards college credit for credentials. Students who have obtained a nationally recognized credential may obtain college credit for lower division courses. Such credentials include CHDS, CPC, and the various CHTS specific credentials. Please see the HIT Program Coordinator for more information regarding credit for credentials.

### CREDIT AWARD FOR CREDENTIALS HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

\*Students submitting more than one credential for credit. They cannot double dip credits. For example, the CHTS-P Awards for HLIN 1105 and 2203, and the CHTP-IM awards for HLIN 1105 and 2207. If a student came requesting both those certifications, they would be awarded a maximum of 9 credits because they could only count the HLIN 1105 one time.

ALLIED HEALTH CREDENTIAL	RECOMMENDING INSTITUTION	LOWER DIVISION	NAMES OF LOWER DIVISION COURSES	UPPER DIVISION
Technical/Software Support Staff Credential (CHTS-TS)	Pierpont Community and Technical College	18	HLIN 1105: Computers in Healthcare (3 credits) INFO 2205: Information Technology: Hardware and Operating Systems (3 credits) INFO 2206: Advanced Hardware and Operating Systems (3 Credits) INFO 2204: Programming, Data & File Structures (3 credits) INFO 2250: Cisco I (3 credits) OFAD 2233: Database Applications (3 credits)	0
Trainer Credential (CHTS – TR)	Pierpont Community and Technical College	9	HLIN 1105: Computers in Healthcare (3 credits) OFAD 2233: Database Applications (3 credits) OFAD 2240: Administrative Office Procedures (3 credits)	0
Certified Coding Specialist (CCS)	Pierpont Community and Technical College	10	HLIN 2211: Diagnosis Medical Coding (3 Credits) HLIN 2212: Inpatient Procedural Medical Coding (3 Credits) HLIN 2213: Outpatient Procedural Medical Coding (5 Credits)	0
Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity				
Certified Healthcare Documentation Specialist Certification (CHDS)	Pierpont Community and Technical College	6	HLCA 1100: Medical Terminology (3 credits) HLCA 2200 Interpretation of Diagnostic Data (3 credits)	0
American Academy of Professional Coders				
Certified Professional Coder (CPC)	Pierpont Community and Technical College	8	HLIN 2213: Outpatient Procedural Medical Coding (5 credits) HLIN 2211: Diagnosis Medical Coding (3 credits)	0

## PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

Should you decide to withdraw from the HIT program for any reason, an appointment needs to be made with your faculty advisor to discuss the situation. It is the responsibility of the student to follow the official college policy for withdrawal. Please note: Before withdrawing from the program due to personal problems, please come talk to the instructor or advisor. Instead of withdrawing from the courses or program, it is possible to delay completion of the course.

## ACADEMIC DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM

To remain in a graduate from the HIT program, a student must earn a “C” grade or above in every required class in the HIT curriculum and maintain an overall cumulative GPA of 2.0. Any classes accepted as substitutes for curricular classes also require a grade of “C” or above. Students who receive a “D” or “F” in a course must repeat the course before continuing in the program’s course sequence. If students receive two such grades in the same course, they will be removed from the program.

## FACULTY ADVISORY SYSTEM

Each Health Information Technology (HIT) student will be assigned a faculty advisor who is a member of the HIT faculty. The primary responsibility of the faculty advisor is to assist students in selecting appropriate courses to ensure timely completion of program requirements.

The faculty advisor maintains an academic advising file for each advisee, which may include high school transcripts, ACT scores, transcripts from any previously completed college coursework, and documentation of earned credits. Advisors provide guidance regarding course selection and program progression; however, ultimate responsibility for meeting degree requirements and scheduling advising appointments rests with the student.

Students are required to schedule an advising appointment with their assigned faculty advisor prior to the pre-registration period each semester. HIT faculty members maintain regular office hours and are available for student advising by appointment. Appointments may be conducted either virtually or in person, depending on availability.

While students may consult faculty members during posted office hours without a scheduled appointment, it is strongly recommended that any meeting anticipated requires more than a brief discussion to be scheduled in advance. Scheduling appointments ensures adequate time for advisement and helps prevent conflicts when multiple students seek advice simultaneously.

## GRADING SYSTEM

The grade scale for all Health Information Technology and Clinical Practicum courses is:

- A 92-100
- B 84-91
- C 75- 83
- D 66- 74
- F 0- 65

In the lecture and lab courses, the grades will be based on periodic quizzes, tests, projects, assignments, and reports. Each course will outline what is required in the syllabus.

The clinical practicum course grades will be based on EHR Go assignments, Peer to Peer Clinical Teams Opportunities, Clinical Rotation Reports (if applicable), attendance (time) sheets, and evaluations by clinical supervisors.

Assignments may consist of readings, exercises in various technical skills, EHR Go Assignments, Peer to Peer opportunities group projects, oral and written reports. All written assignments are to be typed in Times New Roman 12 pt. font, double spaced, and in an acceptable report folder. Assignments submitted in any other form may, at the discretion of the instructor, be corrected but with a reduction in grade. The instructor may choose to accept written assignments in other formats from time to time and the student will be so informed. Material submitted in an illegible form will be returned to the student to be redone and resubmitted in a specified time frame.

### LATE WORK

The student is responsible for any information, assignments, and work missed from courses. Make up tests and assignments will be given at the discretion of the instructor. The prior arrangements must be made individually between the instructor and student being initiated by the student.

All assignments should be turned in by the due date listed. If extended illness or other circumstances, student is still responsible for submitting work unless other arrangements have been made with instructor.

It is the responsibility of the student to review each course syllabi, course schedules and due dates.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Health Information Technology (HIT) Program adheres to the School of Health Careers adopted Attendance Policy and applied it within the context of a fully online learning environment.

Students are required to actively participate in all online courses on a weekly basis, as defined in each course syllabus. Attendance in an online course is demonstrated through timely engagement in required learning activities, which may include, but are not limited to, logging into the course, participating in discussion forums, completing assignments, quizzes, examinations, and other course-related activities within the designated timeframes.

Students who fail to participate in required online activities for the equivalent of **10% of the course duration** will receive a written warning. Students who miss or fail to participate in **20% or more** of required course activities may be required to withdraw from the course or will receive a final grade of “F,” in accordance with institutional policy.

To remain in good standing and graduate from the HIT program, students must earn a minimum grade of **“C” or higher** in all required HIT curriculum courses and maintain an overall cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of **2.0** or higher. Any approved substitute courses applied toward curriculum requirements must also be completed with a grade of “C” or higher.

Students who earn a grade of “D” or “F” in any required course must repeat the course and achieve a grade of “C” or higher before progressing further in the program’s prescribed course sequence. Students who receive two failing grades (“D” or “F”) in the same course will be dismissed from the HIT program.

Regular and consistent participation in online coursework is an essential component of professionalism and is critical to successful completion of the program. Attendance and participation requirements specific to each course are outlined in individual course syllabi. These policies may be subject to revision at the beginning of each academic semester.

### EMAIL/Blackboard

Each student is required to activate their Unified Computer Account (UCA) upon admission to the College. Activation of the UCA is necessary to access college email, the learning management system (Blackboard), and other institutional systems used for online instruction.

Pierpont-issued email accounts serve as the official method of communication between the College and students and remain active for the duration of a student’s enrollment. Students are responsible for regularly checking their Pierpont email account and are expected to respond to official communications in a timely manner.

Email is an approved and primary communication method between students and instructors. Faculty within the Health Information Technology (HIT) Program use college-issued email to distribute course-related announcements, instructional updates, program information, and, when applicable, employment or professional opportunities.

Failure to activate or regularly monitor the Pierpont email account does not excuse students from responsibility for information communicated through official college channels.

Communication about a particular HIT course should be utilized within the Blackboard communication tool.

## ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY

Pierpont Community and Technical College places a high value on academic integrity and expects all students to uphold the highest standards of honesty in their academic work. Academic dishonesty undermines the educational process and is not tolerated by the College.

### **Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty is defined as any action that improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance. This includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

**Plagiarism:** Submitting work that is not one's own without appropriate acknowledgment. This includes copying or closely paraphrasing another person's written, electronic, visual, or oral work—whether published or unpublished—and presenting it as original work. Students are responsible for understanding plagiarism regardless of intent or awareness.

**Cheating:** Engaging in dishonest practices during examinations, quizzes, assignments, or other graded activities. Examples include:

- Obtaining unauthorized assistance from another student
- Providing unauthorized assistance to another student
- Copying or sharing examination content
- Using unauthorized materials, notes, books, electronic devices, or online resources during assessments

**Forgery, Misrepresentation, or Fraud:** Altering or falsifying academic records, grades, or documents; using false identification; or misrepresenting academic work or credentials

### **Responsibility**

- All students share responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Claims of unintentional misconduct, lack of knowledge, or misunderstanding do not excuse violations when academic dishonesty has been confirmed.

**Sanctions:**

- Penalties for academic dishonesty may range from:
- A reduced or failing grade on an assignment or examination
- A failing grade in the course
- Academic probation or suspension
- Dismissal from the College

**Reporting and Appeals**

Incidents of academic dishonesty are addressed through established academic procedures. Students have the right to due process and may appeal decisions in accordance with the College's Academic Complaint and Appeals policies outlined in the Academic Catalog.

# PROCESS TO INITIATE A CHARGE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

## Process to Initiate a Charge of Academic Dishonesty

Pierpont Community and Technical College follow a formal, structured process to ensure fairness, consistency, and due process when addressing allegations of academic dishonesty.

### **1. Identification of Suspected Academic Dishonesty**

When an instructor or academic staff member believes a student may have violated the Academic Dishonesty Policy which includes plagiarism, cheating, forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud, the instructor initiates the process by documenting the incident and collecting supporting evidence. This may include copies of the students' work, plagiarism detection reports, examination materials, or other relevant documentation.

### **2. Notification and Initial Review**

The instructor informs the student of the suspected violation and reviews the evidence with the student, when appropriate. Depending on the circumstances, the instructor may also consult with the appropriate academic administrator or designated Academic Affairs representative to determine whether the allegation meets the definition of academic dishonesty under college policy.

### **3. Filing the Academic Dishonesty Charge**

If sufficient evidence exists, the instructor formally submits a charge of academic dishonesty in accordance with college procedures. The charge is documented and forwarded through the established academic reporting process for review. Academic dishonesty cases are handled consistently across all academic programs.

### **4. Determination of Sanctions**

Upon review, appropriate sanctions are determined based on the nature, severity, and frequency of the offense. Possible academic sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

- A reduced or failed grade on the assignment, examination, or project
- A failing grade in the course
- Academic probation
- Suspension or dismissal from the College

### **5. Student Rights and Appeals**

Students are afforded due process and retain the right to appeal decisions related to academic dishonesty charges. Appeals must be submitted in accordance with the College's **Academic Complaint and Appeals Process**, as outlined in the Academic Catalog.

To initiate and process a charge of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, and academic fraud, and/or to begin the process of issuing sanctions/punishment, the instructor must do the following:

1. Notify the student in writing of the charge and the penalty and schedule a conference within five academic days of discovering the infraction.
2. Meet with the student to discuss the issue, to present evidence, to review all relevant materials, to give the student opportunity for rebuttal, and to complete the Notification of Academic Misconduct (NAM) form as soon as possible but no longer than five academic days following the discovery of the violation.
3. Responsibility/Resolution
  - a. If the student accepts responsibility for both the charge and the sanctions, he or she signs the misconduct form, and the case is closed. Within five academic days of resolution of the case, faculty should make three copies of the NAM form: one for the student, one for faculty records, and one for the Office of the Provost.
  - b. If the student does not accept responsibility as charged, he or she may appeal to the Dean of the program. If the student and chair reach a resolution, the chair should make three copies of the NAM form: one for the student, one for departmental records, and one for the Office of Provost. These copies should be distributed within five academic days of resolution of the case.
  - c. If the student and the chair do not reach a resolution, the student may appeal to the Student Conduct Board. This appeal must be initiated within five academic days of the student's meeting with the chair.
  - d. If the student appeals to the Student Conduct Board, the assigned panel will examine the case, and a decision will be reached.
  - e. If the student disagrees with the decision of the Student Conduct Board, he or she may appeal to the provost, whose decision is final.

## GRADUATION AUDIT

Students are strongly encouraged to apply for graduation early and no later than the published graduation deadlines. In addition, all students must complete a required degree audit appointment to ensure that all program and graduation requirements have been met. Both the graduation application and HIT degree audit must be completed the semester prior to the intended graduation term.

Students should be advised that degree audit appointment times are limited and fill quickly. Failure to schedule an appointment in a timely manner may delay graduation. To schedule a degree audit appointment, students must contact their Program Coordinator. Students are responsible for regularly monitoring their Pierpont student email account and the College website for important graduation and degree audit updates, deadlines, and instructions. <https://www.pierpont.edu/graduation>

## COPYRIGHT LAW

Materials presented in this program may be protected by copyright law. Unauthorized reproduction, distribution, or use of these materials is prohibited.

## STUDY HABITS

College coursework typically requires a significantly greater investment of time and effort outside of formal instruction than is required at the high school level. Independent study activities such as reading, reviewing course materials, completing assignments, conducting research, and preparing reports are essential components of collegiate learning. As a result, Health Information Technology (HIT) students who enroll in a full course load should expect to devote additional study time in order to achieve academic performance comparable to their high school experience.

Students should understand that college coursework demands strong time management skills and that free time may be more limited than it appears at first glance. Successful students are those who establish and maintain a structured schedule that balances coursework, personal responsibilities, and other activities. Scheduling regular, dedicated study time at productive hours of the day is critical to academic success. When academic responsibilities are managed effectively, students are better positioned to take advantage of additional learning opportunities available through the college.

Academic challenges are often not the result of a lack of ability, but instead stem from one or more of the following factors:

1. Failure to fully commit to the responsibilities of being a college student
2. Allowing extracurricular or nonacademic activities to take priority over coursework
3. Ineffective or underdeveloped study habits
4. Personal circumstances that interfere with academic performance
5. Inadequate prior educational preparation
6. Failure to regularly attend or participate in required coursework
7. Failure to complete assignments by established deadlines

Pierpont Community and Technical College offer academic support services through the Learning Strategies Connection, which provides students with instruction and resources on effective study skills, note-taking techniques, test-taking strategies, and other tools designed to support academic success.

It is available on the website at <https://sites.google.com/a/pierpont.edu/pierpont-s-learning-strategies-connection/?pli=1> Please take advantage of these valuable resources!

## ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

### American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA)

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) is the leading professional organization for health information management (HIM) professionals worldwide. Membership in AHIMA is strongly encouraged for students enrolled in the Health Information Technology (HIT) Program and is available at a discounted student rate.

AHIMA provides a wide range of professional resources, including scholarly journals, newsletters, toolkits, access to the HIM Body of Knowledge, legislative updates, advocacy tools, continuing education opportunities, and employment listings within the health information management field. The association also sponsors educational conferences, webinars, and professional development sessions designed to support lifelong learning and career advancement.

Through its advocacy and leadership initiatives, AHIMA plays a key role in shaping policy, standards, and best practices in health information management. Student involvement in AHIMA offers valuable opportunities for professional networking, career exploration, and engagement with current issues impacting the health information profession. [www.ahima.org](http://www.ahima.org)

### AHIMA STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

As part of the Health Information Technology (HIT) program requirements, students are required to obtain student membership in the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA). The current student membership fee is \$49.00.

AHIMA membership supports students' academic and professional development by offering valuable industry resources, networking opportunities, and up-to-date information on the health information management profession.

Application for membership can also be found on the Internet at [www.AHIMA.org/membership](http://www.AHIMA.org/membership).

## Top 10 Reasons for Becoming an AHIMA Student Member

- 1. Access to Career-Focused Resources from Day One**

AHIMA supports students from classroom to career with career mapping tools, résumé guidance, interview preparation, and professional development resources designed specifically for health information students. [\[ahima.org\]](http://ahima.org)
- 2. Exclusive Access to the AHIMA Body of Knowledge™ (BoK)**

Student members receive full access to AHIMA's online HIM library, which includes practice briefs, research articles, white papers, toolkits, and regulatory guidance with invaluable resource for coursework and professional growth. [\[AHIMA Stud...Membership\]](#)
- 3. Digital Subscription to the *Journal of AHIMA***

Stay current with industry trends, compliance updates, emerging technologies, and best practices through AHIMA's award-winning professional journal, delivered digitally to members. [\[AHIMA Stud...Membership\]](#)
- 4. Networking with Health Information Professionals Nationwide**

Membership connects students to AHIMA's national community and their state component association, providing opportunities to network, attend events, and engage with professionals across healthcare settings. [\[ahima.org\]](http://ahima.org),
- 5. Career Assist Job Board and Early Job Access**

AHIMA's Career Assist platform allows students to build profiles, upload résumés, search for internships and jobs, and receive early access to job postings before they open to the public. [\[ahima.org\]](http://ahima.org)
- 6. Discounts on Certification Exams, Prep Materials, and Events**

Student members save money on AHIMA certification exams, exam preparation tools, textbooks, webinars, and national and state conferences with often offsetting the low cost of membership. [\[AHIMA Stud...Membership\]](#),
- 7. Free and Discounted Educational Webinars**

AHIMA offers members free or reduced-cost webinars, microlearning opportunities, and career prep sessions to support academic success and continuing professional development.
- 8. Eligibility for Scholarships and Awards**

Student members may apply for AHIMA Foundation scholarships and state association awards that recognize academic achievement, leadership, and professional involvement. [\[AHIMA Stud...Membership\]](#),
- 9. Opportunities for Leadership, Service, and Volunteering**

Students can serve on advisory councils, committees, and volunteer initiatives that enhance résumés, build leadership skills, and demonstrate professional engagement.

## 10. Affordable Membership with High Return on Investment

AHIMA student membership is offered at a reduced annual rate, making it an affordable way to gain professional resources, industry access, and career advantages while still in school

### WEST VIRGINIA HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

The West Virginia Health Information Management Association (WVHIMA) is the state professional association for health information professionals and is affiliated with the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA). WVHIMA provides a variety of continuing education opportunities, professional development activities, networking events, and educational sessions throughout the year to support students and professionals across the state. Additional information is available at [www.wvhima.org](http://www.wvhima.org).

As part of the Health Information Technology (HIT) Program, students are required to participate in WVHIMA-related activities as directed by the program.

Students who hold AHIMA student membership automatically receive student membership in WVHIMA at no additional cost. Through this dual membership, students receive communications and publications from both the national and state associations, helping them stay informed about current trends, regulatory updates, and professional issues affecting the health information profession at both the national and local levels.

### CLINICAL PRACTICUM

The CAHIIM clinical (now commonly referred to as HIM/HIT academic) standards for an associate degree program are based on ensuring that graduates are competent in both knowledge and applied skills needed for entry-level health information roles.

#### 1. Curriculum Content & Competency-Based Education

CAHIIM requires associate degree programs to use a hybrid competency-based curriculum that prepares students for entry-level practice. Students must demonstrate competence in areas such as:

- Health data management
- Medical coding (ICD-10-CM, CPT, HCPCS)
- Healthcare reimbursement systems
- Health information systems (EHRs)
- Legal and ethical standards in healthcare

CAHIIM emphasizes measurable student outcomes and mastery of professional competencies rather than only classroom instruction.

#### 2. Domains of Professional Practice

Associate-level HIM programs must prepare students in core domains including:

- Data structure, content, and information governance
- Healthcare delivery systems
- Clinical classification systems and coding

- Revenue cycle management
- Health law, privacy, and compliance
- Information technology and systems
- Professional ethics and communication

### **3. Applied Learning Outcomes**

Students must demonstrate skills in:

- Accurate health record documentation and analysis
- Coding accuracy and compliance
- Use of electronic health record systems
- Data quality assurance and validation
- Basic health analytics and reporting

### **4. Quality, Privacy, and Compliance Standards**

Programs must ensure students understand and apply:

- HIPAA and healthcare privacy regulations
- Data security and confidentiality practices
- Ethical standards in health information management
- Regulatory compliance requirements in healthcare settings

### **5. Program Structure & Resources**

CAHIIM requires programs to maintain:

- Qualified full-time faculty
- Adequate technology and EHR simulation systems
- Structured assessment of student learning outcomes
- Continuous program improvement through evaluation and reporting

### **6. Entry-Level Workforce Preparation**

Associate degree standards are designed to prepare graduates for:

- Entry-level HIM technician roles
- Coding and billing positions
- Medical records and registration roles
- Data integrity and support positions in healthcare settings

### **Summary**

In short, CAHIIM associate degree standards ensure students graduate with:

- Demonstrated competency-based skills
- Strong foundation in coding, data, and EHR systems
- Understanding of legal, ethical, and compliance requirements
- Readiness for entry-level HIM workforce roles

### **CLINICAL HOURS WAIVER**

In order to recognize students' work experiences and maintain consistency and control over course content, the following policy and procedure has been established:

Students may have an option to reduce clinical hours or completely waive a Clinical Practicum depending on the extent of their experiences. The following criteria must be met:

- Students must have a 3.0 GPA overall, as well as in HIT courses.
- Students' past job experiences must correspond to the type and level of

- activities ascribed to the clinical being waived/reduced. Students may be required to produce samples of work. Determination will be made by the HIT Clinical Coordinator.
- Students must complete and submit required paperwork prior to the midpoint of the semester before the start of the clinical to be waived/reduced. Clinical Coordinator may require a validation visit to the employer.

For course waivers, student must accrue at least 60 credits to graduate with an associate degree.

## CLINICAL REQUIREMENTS

Students may be required to complete a physical examination, vaccinations including Covid19, background checks and other requirements by the clinical affiliate prior to the start of the first day of the clinical rotation. This information will be disseminated and collected by the HIT Clinical Coordinator. Students will be responsible for the cost of all charges applicable to the clinical affiliate requirements. A copy of the health form is in this handbook.

## DRESS CODE

Students are not required to wear uniforms while assigned to clinical affiliates. However, as participants in a program prepare them for a professional healthcare career, students are expected to dress in a professional, business-appropriate manner at all times while on clinical rotation.

Professional appearance includes, but is not limited to:

- Neat, clean, and well-groomed hair and personal appearance
- Clothing that is modest, professional, and appropriate for a healthcare setting
- No denim, athletic wear, or athletic shoes unless explicitly permitted by the clinical affiliate

Students must comply with all dress code policies established by their assigned clinical affiliate. If a clinical site's dress code is more restrictive than program guidelines, the clinical affiliate's policy must be followed.

Each student is required to always wear their assigned name badge while at any clinical affiliate.

Cell phone use is strictly prohibited during clinical rotation hours, except when expressly permitted by the clinical affiliate or supervising personnel for work-related purposes.

Failure to comply with dress code or professional conduct expectations may result in disciplinary action in accordance with program and clinical affiliate policies.

## STUDENT CONDUCT

Due to the professional nature of the Health Information Technology program, students are expected to always conduct themselves in a manner consistent with healthcare workplace standards while participating in clinical experiences. Professional conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following expectations:

- The clinical affiliate should be viewed as a potential employer. Students are expected to demonstrate professionalism, courtesy, and a strong work ethic at all times.
- Students are expected to be prompt and dependable for all clinical assignments and scheduled activities.
- If a student anticipates being tardy or absent, the student must notify both the clinical affiliate supervisor and the college clinical coordinator as soon as possible.
- A Leave of Absence Form is required for any absence from the clinical affiliate and must be completed according to program procedures.
- Students should avoid involvement in office politics, conflicts, or workplace factions. It is important to remember that the student's role at the clinical site is that of a student learner, not an employee.
- Any concerns, incidents, or problems that arise at the clinical affiliate must be reported to the college clinical coordinator immediately.

Failure to adhere to these professional conduct expectations may result in disciplinary action in accordance with program and clinical affiliate policies.

## CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

One of the most fundamental professional practice standards in health information management is the obligation to protect the confidentiality of health records and uphold everyone's right to privacy in the collection, use, and disclosure of personally identifiable health information. Medical and social information contained within the health record is highly personal and sensitive. As such, this information may be accessed or disclosed only with proper authorization from the patient or as otherwise permitted or required by law.

All students are required to sign a confidentiality statement acknowledging that patient information must not be accessed, sought, discussed, or released without appropriate authorization and a legitimate educational or professional purpose.

Any violation of confidentiality by a student will result in immediate dismissal from the Health Information Technology (HIT) program. Such violations will be documented and placed in the student's academic file.

Students may also be required to sign additional confidentiality or nondisclosure agreements as mandated by the assigned clinical affiliate.

In addition, most clinical affiliates require students to complete HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) training prior to or during their clinical rotation. Students must comply with all HIPAA regulations, organizational policies, and clinical affiliate privacy and security requirements.

Failure to adhere to confidentiality and privacy standards may result in disciplinary action up to and including program dismissal and removal from the clinical site.

## HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY (HIPAA)

### **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**

HIPAA is an acronym for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, which was enacted by Congress in 1996. HIPAA establishes national standards to protect individuals' medical records and other personal health information and applies to healthcare organizations, their workforce members, and students participating in clinical experiences.

HIPAA was designed to accomplish the following:

- Enable individuals to maintain and transfer health insurance coverage when changing or losing employment
- Reduce healthcare fraud and abuse
- Establish industry-wide standards for electronic healthcare transactions, including billing and administrative processes
- Require the protection, privacy, and confidential handling of Protected Health Information (PHI)

### HIPAA Violations and Penalties

HIPAA includes civil and criminal penalties for improper access, use, or disclosure of individually identifiable health information.

Covered entities and specified individuals who knowingly obtain or disclose protected health information without authorization may face:

- Fines of up to \$50,000 and
- Imprisonment for up to one (1) year

Offenses committed under false pretenses may result in increased penalties of:

- Fines of up to \$100,000 and
- Imprisonment for up to five (5) years

Individuals including directors, employees, volunteers, and students may be held personally and criminally liable under HIPAA, in accordance with principles of corporate criminal liability.

Students are expected to fully comply with HIPAA regulations, institutional policies, and all privacy and security requirements of their assigned clinical affiliate. Violations of HIPAA may result in immediate removal from the clinical site, disciplinary action, and dismissal from the HIT program, as well as potential legal consequences.

## TRANSPORTATION

Students are responsible for providing their own transportation to the clinical affiliate. This will include any parking fees that are required. Effort will be made to assign students to areas that will allow the student to carpool, but this is not assured. Arrangements to carpool are the responsibility of the student.

Placement of the student at clinical affiliates will be governed by the needs of the student and the availability of the clinical affiliate. This may require the student to travel a distance. You, as a student, should keep this in mind when you prepare the class schedule.

Because the student should have a variety of clinical experience, the use of expanded clinical affiliates is explored on a continuous basis. In this regard, the student can be assigned to multiple facilities.

## NATIONAL EXAMINATION FOR REGISTERED HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNICIAN (RHIT)

The national certification examination is a computerized test administered through the American Health Information Management Association. Application and exam details are available on the AHIMA website ([Registered Health Information Technician \(RHIT\) | AHIMA](#)), or by contacting AHIMA at 233 N. Michigan Ave., 21st Floor, Chicago, IL 60601-5809.

The exam is offered Monday through Friday, excluding holidays, at approved testing centers, including a site located in Morgantown, West Virginia. Candidates receive their exam results immediately upon completion of the test.

If a retake is needed, the examination may be repeated in the next testing window, as testing is offered in quarterly cycles. Early testing prior to graduation is also available. Students must register and pay the required fee to take the examination before graduation in order to receive credit for HLIN 2995 HIT Capstone. This provides an opportunity for students to complete the RHIT examination prior or after program completion, following the guidelines outlined in the student handbook. The **Pierpont's School Code is 491.**

Please visit the Certification website at: <http://www.ahima.org/certification/>

NOTE: As part of the HLIN 2995 course requirement, it is mandatory that all students register and pay (may be paid for through financial aid by purchasing the required "RHIT Bundle" for this course) for their RHIT exam. The student must submit a copy of their paid receipt to the Program for the class, otherwise, a grade of "Incomplete" will be assigned until a receipt of purchase is received by the HIT Coordinator before the student receives credit for this course.

## ADVANCING YOUR EDUCATION

### Registered Health Information Administrator (RHIA)

A Registered Health Information Administrator (RHIA) is a healthcare professional who manages health information systems and ensures the integrity, confidentiality, and proper use of health data in accordance with medical, administrative, ethical, and legal standards within the healthcare delivery system. RHIAs play a critical leadership role in ensuring that health information is accurate, secure, and accessible to support quality patient care, organizational reimbursement, medical research, population health, healthcare planning, program evaluation, and health education initiatives.

With a bachelor's degree from a CAHIIM-accredited program and successful completion of the RHIA certification exam, credentialed professionals are prepared for leadership and advanced practice roles within healthcare and related industries.

Career opportunities for RHIAs include, but are not limited to:

- Health Information Management (HIM) Department Director
- HIM Systems or Operations Manager
- Data Quality or Data Integrity Manager
- Information Security or Privacy Officer
- HIM Educator or College Instructor
- Healthcare Consultant or Auditor

Universities throughout the United States offer on-campus and online pathways leading to RHIA eligibility, including degree-completion options for students who already hold an associate degree.

Pierpont Community & Technical College maintains articulation agreements with select four-year institutions that accept the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Health Information Technology as the first two years of a bachelor's degree in health information management.

These agreements provide students with a streamlined and cost-effective pathway toward degree completion and eligibility to pursue the RHIA credential.

- Fairmont State University
- St. Joseph's College of Maine (online)
- University of Cincinnati (online)
- University of Chicago
- SUNY
- IUPUI
- Western Governors University (WGU) (online)
- West Virginia University

## INSURANCE

### Liability Insurance

Each student is covered by Liability by the State of West Virginia. This applies only to the clinical affiliate. Individual liability insurance is available. See program coordinator.

## Health Insurance

Each student is expected to be covered by health insurance. Refer to Pierpont student handbook for further information.

## AWARDS

### Pierpont's Outstanding Health Information Technology Student:

An awards banquet is held each year to recognize students who have demonstrated exceptional abilities and talents in a specific academic area of the college. The Outstanding HIT Student Award is presented to a graduating student at this banquet. The candidate for this award is chosen by the HIT faculty and is based upon academic excellence in the classroom and outstanding performance in the clinical practicum. The student, his/her family and the faculty of the program are invited to the banquet.

### Academic Achievement Award

The Academic Achievement Award is a recognition offered by Pierpont Community & Technical College to honor students who demonstrate outstanding academic performance and commitment to their educational goals. This award reflects Pierpont's mission of promoting academic excellence and supporting student success.

Eligibility for the Academic Achievement Award is typically based on academic criteria, such as cumulative grade point average (GPA), successful completion of coursework, and enrollment status. Additional eligibility requirements, award amounts, and selection criteria may vary by academic year and are determined by the College.

The Academic Achievement Award may be applied toward tuition, fees, or other educational expenses, as designated by Pierpont Community & Technical College and subject to available funding.

Students are encouraged to:

- Maintain strong academic standing
- Monitor Pierpont communications and the College website for award announcements
- Meet all application and deadline requirements, if applicable

Receiving an Academic Achievement Award is a notable accomplishment and may be used to demonstrate academic excellence for resumes, transfer institutions, scholarship applications, and professional opportunities.

For the most current information regarding eligibility, application procedures, deadlines, and award details, students should contact the Pierpont Financial Aid Office or visit the Pierpont Community & Technical College website.

WVHIMA annually grants awards to financially assist qualified students who have completed courses in an accredited West Virginia college/university program and are eligible to write the examination for the Registered Health Information Technician

(RHIT). <https://www.wvhima.org/members/awards-2/achievement-awards/>

## SUMMARY

This Health Information Technology (HIT) Handbook has been developed to include information that is important to students enrolled in the HIT program. However, additional policies, procedures, or updates may be communicated as students' progress through the program.

Students are encouraged to address any questions, concerns, suggestions, or issues with their academic advisor and/or instructors. Academic advisors are available to provide guidance, support, and assistance throughout the program.

Students are required to sign an acknowledgment form confirming that they have received, read, and understood the handbook. This signed form will be placed in the student's academic file and may be found in the appendix of the handbook.

For further clarification of college policies refer to Pierpont's College Student Handbook.

## INSTRUCTORS FOR THE HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

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By appointment

Vickie Findley, RHIA  
Professor of Health Information Technology and Medical Billing and Coding  
Program Coordinator – Health Sciences  
Advanced Technology Center, Office 116L  
304-367-4716  
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By Appointment



Health Information Technology Program  
Acknowledgement of Student Handbook

I, \_\_\_\_\_ certify that I have received a copy of the Health Information Technology (HIT) Student Handbook. I affirm that I have read, understand, and agree to comply with the policies, information, and professional standards of conduct outlined therein. I acknowledge that I assume full responsibility for adhering to all requirements and expectations set forth in the HIT Student Handbook.

I further acknowledge that I have been provided with the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification regarding the content of the handbook.

Student Signature:	Date:
Witness Signature:	Date:



**Authorization for Release of Information**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby authorize the release of my physical examination results, immunization records, and any other required health screening documentation to the Health Information Technology (HIT) Program for the purpose of clinical placement and program compliance requirements.

I understand that this information will be used solely for educational and clinical site verification purposes. This authorization is valid until I revoke it in writing or upon completion of the program requirements.

I understand that I may refuse to sign this authorization; however, doing so may affect my ability to participate in required clinical experiences.

Student Signature:	Date:
Witness Signature:	Date:



**CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT  
CLINICAL AFFILIATES**

Health Information Technology Students  
Confidentiality in Clinical Affiliates

I, \_\_\_\_\_ as a student in the Health Information Technology Program, acknowledge and understand that I am bound by the confidentiality standards of the health information profession. I further understand that I must comply with all applicable federal privacy regulations, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), while participating in clinical affiliate experiences.

I agree that I will not access, seek, disclose, or discuss any patient information unless it is required for authorized educational activities. I understand that all patient health information encountered during my clinical experience is strictly confidential and must be protected at all times.

I acknowledge that any breach of confidentiality or violation of HIPAA policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate dismissal from the Health Information Technology Program at Pierpont Community & Technical College. I also understand that violations of federal privacy laws may result in additional civil and/or criminal penalties.

Student Signature:	Date:
Witness Signature:	Date:



**Health Information Technology Program**

**PHOTO RELEASE AUTHORIZATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby grant permission to the Health Information Technology Program at Pierpont Community & Technical College to use photographs of me for promotional, publicity, and educational purposes. This includes, but is not limited to, use in printed materials, electronic publications, and program marketing efforts.

I understand that selected photographs may be used for recruitment and promotional purposes, including publication on the Pierpont Community & Technical College website and other official program platforms.

I understand that I will not receive compensation for the use of these photographs and that the program may use images taken during academic or clinical activities.

**Permission Granted:**

YES \_\_\_\_\_  NO \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature:	Date:
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# PIERPONT

COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE

PIERPONT COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE  
HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

A **Leave of Absence Request Form** must be completed by the student for any planned early dismissal, full-day absence, or tardiness during the clinical practicum. The completed form must be submitted to the clinical site supervisor for review and approval.

The student and the clinical site supervisor are responsible for mutually agreeing upon an appropriate make-up date and time, which must be completed after the absence has occurred. Clinical supervisors must approve all absences and make-up arrangements. Grades for any clinical practicum course will not be issued until all missed time has been satisfactorily completed.

The Health Information Technology (HIT) Clinical Coordinator may be consulted prior to approval of a leave request and will review, monitor, and follow up on all approved requests submitted by students.

In the event of student tardiness, a Leave of Absence Request Form must also be completed, and a make-up time must be arranged and approved by the student and the clinical supervisor or instructor.

All completed Leave of Absence Request Forms will be retained in the student's official clinical file.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date leave form submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/time of leave requested: + \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for request of leave: \_\_\_\_\_

Request approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clinical Supervisor Date

Request reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
HIT Clinical Coordinator Date

Date and time absence will be made up \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to make up clinical time missed due to absence during the date and time listed above.

Student Signature:	Date:
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The student has successfully made up the time for the absence listed above.

Student Signature:	Date:
Clinical Site Supervisor:	Date:
HIT Clinical Coordinator:	Date:

## Health Information Technology Request for Waiver/Reduction of Clinical Hours

Students may be eligible to receive a reduction in required clinical hours, or a full waiver of a Clinical Practicum based on the scope, duration, and relevance of prior professional experience, provided all clinical objectives, competencies, and required contact hours are satisfactorily met.

Eligibility is subject to the following criteria:

- Students must maintain a minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0, including a 3.0 GPA in all Health Information Technology (HIT) courses.
- The student's prior employment experience must directly correspond to the level, responsibilities, and competencies associated with the clinical practicum being considered for reduction or waiver.
- Students may be required to submit documentation or work samples demonstrating competency. Final eligibility determination will be made by the Clinical Practicum Coordinator.
- All required documentation must be completed and submitted no later than the midpoint of the semester preceding the clinical practicum to be reduced or waived.
- The Clinical Practicum Coordinator may require a validation visit to the employer to verify experiential learning.

To graduate with an associate degree under a clinical course waiver, students must have accrued a minimum of 63 academic credits.

### **Procedure**

1. The student must complete the required application form in its entirety, including all sections on both the front and reverse sides. A separate form must be submitted for each employer.
2. The student's supervisor must provide a signature and official job title. This information must be notarized to verify authenticity.

### **For Reduction of Clinical Hours:**

1. The student must register for the clinical practicum course and pay full tuition.
2. The student will complete the amended number of clinical hours or days as determined by the Clinical Practicum Coordinator.

3. All required clinical documentation must be completed and submitted, reflecting all activities performed, as if conducted at an approved clinical site.
4. Upon successful completion, full course credit will be awarded and recorded on the student's official transcript.

**For Full Course Waiver:**

1. Upon approval, the Clinical Practicum Coordinator will submit all required documentation to the College Registrar.
2. No course credit will be recorded on the student's transcript; however, the waiver will be applied toward degree completion requirements.

Student Name: (First, Middle, and Last Name)	
Student ID Number/SS#:	
Phone Number:	
Email:	

Employer:	
Department:	Job Title:
Dates:	Duration:
List/Describe job duty(ies) attach additional pages if necessary	

I have truthfully and ethically portrayed my past work experiences as outlined above.

Student Signature:

Date:

The above description is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Supervisor Signature:

Date:

Supervisor Name (please print):

Job Title:

Phone and/or Email:

Notary Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Notary Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE USE ONLY: Clinical hours waived/reduced/denied.

HLIN 2206	HLIN 2208
Clinical Coordinator:	Date:

# PIERPONT

COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Coordination of Clinical Internship HLIN  
 HLIN 2206 and HLIN 2208 (if applicable)  
 Acknowledgement and Agreement

I, as a student enrolled in the Health Information Technology (HIT) Program, acknowledge and agree to complete the required clinical internship courses, HLIN 2206 during the third semester and HLIN 2208 during the fourth semester of the program.

I understand that clinical internship schedules and placements with approved clinical affiliates are coordinated and arranged by the Clinical Coordinator.

I acknowledge that clinical internships are to be completed during the regular academic school-year semester and that I am responsible for making any necessary arrangements to accommodate work, family, or personal commitments accordingly.

I understand that I am responsible for providing my own transportation to and from the assigned clinical affiliate site. I further acknowledge that travel to the clinical site may require commuting a significant distance, and I accept responsibility for planning my schedule to allow sufficient travel time.

I understand that successful completion of both required clinical internships is mandatory and must occur prior to my anticipated graduation date. I acknowledge that graduation from the Health Information Technology Program is contingent upon the successful completion of these clinical internship requirements.

Student Signature:	Date:
Clinical Site Supervisor:	Date:
HIT Clinical Coordinator:	Date:

# Health Information Technology

## Essential Functions Signature Form

### ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

All accepted Health Information students are expected to meet the following nonacademic criteria (essential functions) in order to understand and meet the demands required to be successful as a student/graduate of the HIT program and in professional practice. Failure to meet the essential functions will result in dismissal from the program. Essential functions for acceptance into the HIT program and clinical practical experiences are included below:

1. Gross Motor Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Move safely within confined or office spaces</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sit and maintain balance for extended periods</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stand and maintain balance when required</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reach above shoulder level (e.g., accessing office materials or equipment)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reach below waist level (e.g., connecting equipment or retrieving materials)</li></ul>
2. Fine Motor Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pick up and manipulate small objects</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write with a pen or pencil</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use a computer keyboard and mouse</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Perform precise hand and finger movements for data entry and record management</li></ul>
3. Physical Endurance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sustain repetitive movements such as typing and data review</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain physical tolerance for extended periods of computer and desk work</li></ul>
4. Physical Strength
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lift and carry light materials or equipment (approximately 10–25 pounds)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Push or pull light carts or equipment when required in clinical or office settings</li></ul>
5. Mobility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bend, stoop, or squat as needed</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Climb stairs or use stools/ladders if required in office or clinical environments</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Move quickly in response to emergency situations if present in a healthcare setting</li></ul>
6. Hearing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hear and respond to normal speaking levels</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hear auditory alerts such as alarms or announcements in clinical or office settings</li></ul>
7. Visual Ability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• View information on computer screens and printed materials</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Distinguish visual indicators such as color-coded alerts or data displays</li></ul>
8. Olfactory Ability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Detect environmental hazards such as smoke or gas when present in healthcare facilities</li></ul>
9. Reading and Comprehension

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and understand written materials such as policies, procedures, coding manuals, and health records</li> </ul>
10. Arithmetic and Quantitative Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform basic mathematical calculations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpret tables, charts, and graphs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use calculators and software tools to compute healthcare statistics and financial data</li> </ul>
11. Emotional and Professional Stability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate professional behavior and ethical judgment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt to changing environments and manage stress effectively</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain focus and manage multiple tasks simultaneously</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulate personal emotions and respond appropriately to challenging situations</li> </ul>
12. Analytical and Information Processing Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer knowledge between contexts</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze and interpret health information data</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize tasks and evaluate outcomes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use short-term and long-term memory effectively</li> </ul>
13. Critical Thinking Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify cause-and-effect relationships</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthesize information from multiple sources</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize and sequence information logically</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and support activities related to health information management functions</li> </ul>
14. Interpersonal Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate respectfully with faculty, peers, healthcare professionals, and staff</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish professional rapport with physicians, clinicians, and administrative personnel</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage and resolve interpersonal conflict appropriately</li> </ul>
15. Communication Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate clearly in verbal and written formats</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use telephone, email, and virtual communication tools</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide education or guidance related to documentation, coding, and compliance requirements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence and direct activities related to health information processes when appropriate</li> </ul>
16. Technological Competence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navigate electronic health record (EHR) systems and healthcare software applications</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use coding, billing, and data management software</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain data privacy, confidentiality, and security in accordance with HIPAA and institutional policies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt to emerging healthcare technologies and digital workflows</li> </ul>

- Participating in virtual learning, telehealth, and remote work environments as required

#### DISABILITY GUIDELINES

As required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, certain accommodations are provided for those students whose disabilities may affect their pursuit of a college education. These students must annually contact the Coordinator for Students with Disabilities, who is in the Office of Disability Services, if those services are desired. It is the students' responsibility to share their accommodations needs letter with their instructors and clinical trainers by the first scheduled day of class each semester.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I understand and are able to perform all essential functions listed above and meet the health and safety requirements for the Health Information Technology Program at Pierpont Community and Technical College and at my clinical affiliate. I understand that my inability to fulfill these essential functions may result in my removal from the Program.

Student Name (Printed):	
Student Signature:	Date:

#### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Pierpont Community & Technical College is an Equal Opportunity-Affirmative Action institution and provides equal opportunity to all prospective and current members of the student body, faculty, and staff based on individual qualifications and merit without regard to race, sex, religion, age, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation as identified and defined by law.