



Health Informatics 2010

Master's Degree

Standards and Interpretations for Accreditation of
Master's Degree Programs in Health Informatics

CAHOM

Who We Are

The Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM) is an accrediting organization which has independent authority in all actions pertaining to accreditation of educational programs in health informatics and health information management.

CAHIIM is located at 233 N. Michigan Avenue, 21st Floor, Chicago, Illinois, 60601, and on the web at www.cahiim.org

Public Interest

CAHIIM serves the public interest by operating in a consistent manner with all applicable ethical, business and accreditation best practices. Accreditation is a voluntary, self-regulatory process by which nongovernmental associations recognize educational programs found to meet or exceed standards for educational quality. Accreditation also assists in the further improvement of these educational programs as related to resources invested, processes followed, and outcomes achieved.

CAHIIM and its sponsoring organization(s) cooperate to establish, maintain, and promote appropriate standards of quality for postsecondary educational programs in health informatics and information management to provide competent, skilled professionals for the healthcare industry.

Mission

The Commission serves the public interest in advancing the value of health informatics and health information management through quality education by:

- Establishing and enforcing accreditation Standards for health informatics, and health information management higher education programs;
- recognizing programs that meet the Standards;
- assessing student achievement;
- respecting educational innovation and diversity;
- recognizing academic institutions' autonomy;
- emphasizing the principle of volunteerism and peer review, and
- embracing a culture of continuous quality improvement.

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

Through our partnership with academe and the practice fields, CAHIIM serves colleges and universities in a voluntary peer review process as a means to continuously improve quality education to meet healthcare workforce needs. As a result, CAHIIM accreditation becomes the benchmark by which students and employers determine the integrity of health informatics and health information management education.

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I Introduction

For the purposes of program accreditation, CAHIIM views the discipline of health informatics through the lens of three major facets or domains:

- Information systems are concerned with such issues as information systems analysis, design, implementation, and management.
- Informatics is concerned with such issues as the structure, function and transfer of information, socio-technical aspects of health computing, and human-computer interaction.
- Information technology is concerned with such issues as computer networks, database and systems administration, security, and programming.

These three facets are aligned for the purpose of meeting the information needs of the various stakeholders within health care and related systems. Components of each of these facets are highly interactive with each other, requiring knowledge and skills that are shared between them. The result is a critical synergy within the discipline of health informatics. An educational program in health informatics must include content from all three facets although programs may choose to emphasize one or more facets consistent with their mission, goals and objectives.

II Sponsorship

1 Sponsoring Educational Institution

The sponsoring educational institution must be a post-secondary academic institution accredited by an institutional accrediting agency that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, and must be authorized under applicable law or other acceptable authority to award a master's degree.

The health informatics graduate program is designed in concert with the institutional mission and the goals of the college/university division or department in which it is located.

Sponsoring educational institution must be accredited either by a regional accrediting agency or a specialized accrediting agency representing the type of academic institution stated, and the accrediting agency must be recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

2 Responsibilities

The sponsoring educational institution must assure that governance and lines of authority are clearly defined and that the provisions of these Standards are met.

The sponsoring educational institution must clarify the lines of authority and administrative governance of the health informatics program within the framework of the sponsoring institution. The sponsoring educational institution must assure that the provisions of the Standards are met.

III Program Mission, Goals, Assessment and Improvements

3 Program Mission

The program's mission and goals must form the basis for program planning and implementation, and be compatible with the mission of the sponsoring educational institution.

Each program will define its own mission and goals which derive from the purposes of its sponsoring educational institution, its communities of interest, faculty expertise and research initiatives.

4 Program Goals

The program's goals must be stated in terms of educational outcomes to be achieved, are measurable, and reflect the principles and ethics of the health informatics field, and fit within the mission of the sponsoring educational institution.

The program's mission and goals must be outcome-focused and relevant to the mission of the sponsoring educational institution.

5 Program Assessment

A program assessment plan exists for systematic evaluation to the extent to which the mission, goals and objectives of the health informatics program must be met.

A process exists for systematic evaluation to the extent to which the mission, goals and objectives are being met, and describe how this process of assessment and continuous improvement complies with the sponsoring educational institution's overall evaluation plan.

6 Annual Assessment

The program must at least annually assess and document its effectiveness in achieving its stated goals and outcomes.

Each program must annually assess its program goals and outcomes as required by the designated CAHIIM reporting system.

7 Document Program Modifications

The program must use the results of assessment to document program modifications.

Data analysis and action plans must be documented. A program must document how it meets its target goals and objectives and how it plans to address weaknesses observed.

IV Program Curriculum

8 Core Concentration or Specialized Track

The health informatics program must be established as a core concentration or specialized track within a graduate level program of study or culminates with a master's degree.

The program must describe the degree(s) awarded on completion of the program of study. If a certificate is awarded explain how it is an adjunct to the graduate degree.

9 Program-Specific Curriculum

The program's curriculum must reflect the program's mission, goals and objectives. The curriculum must build on health informatics competencies. The curriculum must include evaluation methods to assess student learning outcomes.

The curriculum must focus on the knowledge, skills and values as outlined by the program. CAHIIM considers competencies that have been approved by professional and educational associations and governmental agencies. CAHIIM will validate alignment of competencies and outcome assessments with the program's mission, goals and objectives.

10 Staying Current

The program curriculum must stay current with evolving issues and practices in health informatics.

The program must demonstrate how the curriculum is routinely updated and relevant.

V Faculty

11 Faculty

The program must clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the faculty necessary to fully support and sustain the program.

The number of full-time faculty appointed at the rank of assistant, associate, or full professor must be sufficient to ensure that teaching, research and service goals of the program are met. Part-time and adjunct faculty must be recognized as an important faculty component. The size of the faculty complement in relationship to the size of the student body must support and encourage effective and regular student/faculty interactions. An appropriate student/faculty ratio depends on a number of factors, including the nature of the institution, the range of teaching responsibilities, and teaching intensity (such as didactic material, projects, practice experiences, research).

12 Professional Development

The program must provide opportunities for faculty to stay current with evolving issues and practices in health informatics.

Examples of acceptable mechanisms may include but are not limited to continuing education, memberships and contributions to professional organizations, links with industry.

13 Program Director

The program shall clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the program director necessary to fully support and sustain the program. The program director or equivalent must have a minimum of a master's degree.

The qualifications and responsibilities of the individual(s) responsible for leadership of the health informatics program must be documented.

14 Qualifications

The qualifications of each faculty member must include competence in assigned teaching areas, effectiveness in teaching, and scholarly productivity consistent with their faculty appointment.

The program must maintain documentation of faculty competence, teaching effectiveness, and scholarly productivity consistent with each faculty appointment (including part time and adjunct faculty).

15 Performance

Each faculty member's performance must be evaluated according to the institution's policies.

Evaluation includes accomplishment and innovation in the areas of teaching, research and service. Within applicable institutional policies, faculty, students, and others must be sufficiently involved in the evaluation process.

VI Resources

16 Resources and Services

The instructional resources and services provided for the program including access to reference/library and information technology, as well as other resources used in the curriculum must be adequate, appropriately staffed and accessible by all students regardless of the delivery mode of the program.

The program must be able to demonstrate that current instructional resources, technology, reference/library resources needed to fulfill the requirements of the curriculum, are accessible to and can support all students in the program.

The program must be able to demonstrate that staff and services provided for the health informatics program are sufficient for the level of use required, and specialized to the degree needed by the program to achieve its goals and outcomes.

17 Financial Resources

Resources to support the program's goals and outcomes must include evidence of financial support for the program.

The program must demonstrate that financial resources are adequate to support and maintain the program offered.

18 Advisory Committee

An advisory committee, which is representative of the communities of interest, must be designated and charged with the responsibility of meeting at least annually, to assist program faculty and sponsoring education institution personnel in formulating and periodically revising appropriate goals and curriculum, monitoring needs and expectations, and ensuring program responsiveness to change.

CAHIIM wishes to emphasize the importance of a strong advisory committee comprised of individuals external to the academic institution such as employers, graduates, and others representative of the communities of interest.

VII Students

19 Students

The program must have an effective and accessible academic advising system for students, as well as readily available career and placement advice. Career paths of graduates are monitored, documented and used in the annual program assessment.

Each student enrolled in the program must have access to advisors who are knowledgeable about the program's curriculum and specific courses.

VIII Fair Practices

20 Accurate Published Information

All published program information must accurately reflect the program offered and must be known to all applicants and students.

- The sponsoring educational institution and programmatic accreditation status.
- Admissions policies and procedures.
- Policies on advanced placement, transfer credits and credits for experiential learning.
- Number of credits required for completion of the program.
- Tuition/fees and other costs required to complete the program.
- Policies and procedures for withdrawal and for refunds of tuition/fees.

- Academic calendar.
- Student grievance procedure.
- Criteria for successful completion of each segment of the curriculum and graduation including prerequisites, co-requisites, minimum grade point average, and required courses.

21 Lawful and Non-Discriminatory Practices

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

The college catalog and/or Web site must include an official non-discrimination statement and it must be clear that the health informatics program adheres to the non-discrimination policy as regards faculty employment and student admissions.

IX Administrative Requirements for Maintenance of Accreditation

- 22 Submission of CAHIIM required reports by the determined deadline date.
- 23 Participation in a designated periodic site visit of the accredited program.
- 24 Notification in writing to CAHIIM of any substantive changes in the institution affecting the program's accreditation including changes in sponsoring institution name, ownership, or program officials (Chief Executive Officer, Dean and Program Director) within 30 days of the effective date.
- 25 Payment of all CAHIIM administrative fees.