VERNON COLLEGE
2018-2019
HEALTH INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
STUDENT HANDBOOK

Disclaimer Clause

This Handbook is intended to provide guidelines and procedures for the Health Information Management Program and does not create a contact between the student and Vernon College, nor confer any contractual right upon the student. Vernon College reserves the right to make changes to this handbook at any time without prior notice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VERNON COLLEGE
HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
WELCOME

Welcome to the Vernon College Health Information Management Program. The HIM faculty hopes that you find the field of health information management a rewarding, challenging and profitable career.

The program follows the guidelines set forth by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM), the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), Vernon College mission, and the Advisory Committee for the Health Information Management Program.

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

The information in this guide is specific to the HIM program and should be used as a supplement to the Vernon College 2016-2017 Student Handbook. This document is intended as a guide for questions that you may have concerning performance requirements and expectations for the Health Information Management program.

You will be given the best possible preparation during the didactic (classroom/internet) and clinical practicum to achieve your goals. It will be my goal to provide you the best opportunity possible for success in the program.

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

Sincerely,

Ruth Rascon, RHIT
Health Information Management Program Coordinator

Introduction:

Vernon College has a sincere interest in you as an individual, and looks forward to helping you achieve your goal to become a Health Information Manager.

This handbook contains the policies and procedures of the Health Information Management Program at Vernon College. You should keep this handbook in an easily accessible location, as it contains valuable information you will need in the coming years.

Students must also abide and follow all policies and procedures of Vernon College. Policies are subject to change and all students will be responsible to adhere to any policy change.

Program Contact Information:

Program Coordinator/
Instructor: Ruth Rascon, BS HIM, RHIT

E-Mail: rrascon@vernoncollege.edu

Program Link: http://www.vernoncollege.edu/health-information-technology-home

Program Phone Number: 940-696-8752   Extension 3237

Program Fax Number: 940-689-3822

Program Address: Health Information Management Program
                             Vernon College, CCC
                             4105 Maplewood Avenue
                             Wichita Falls, TX 76308

Vernon Campus: 940-552-6291

ACCREDITATION

The HIM (associate degree) program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM).
Students can apply for student membership with AHIMA using the Educational Program Code of 638.

Associate HIM Curriculum Competencies – Domains
Domain 1 – Data Content, Structure, and Information Governance (24-28%)
      Tasks:
            1. Apply health information guidelines (e.g. coding guidelines, CMS, facility or regional best practices, federal and state regulations)
            2. Apply healthcare standards (e.g. Joint Commission, Meaningful Use)
            3. Define the legal health record
            4. Maintain the integrity of the legal health record
            5. Audit content and completion of the legal health record (e.g. validate document content)
            6. Maintain secondary health information (e.g. patient registration, financial records)
            7. Educate clinicians on documentation and content
            8. Coordinate document control (e.g. create, revise, standardize forms)
            9. Maintain the MPI
Domain 2 – Access, Disclosure, Privacy, and Security (12-16%)
      Tasks:
            1. Manage disclosure of PHI using laws, regulations, and guidelines (e.g. ROI, accounting of disclosures)
            2. Determine right of access to the legal health record
            3. Educate internal customers (e.g. clinicians, staff, volunteers, students) on privacy, access, and disclosure
            4. Educate external customers (e.g. patients, insurance companies, attorneys) on privacy, access, and disclosure
            5. Assess health record disposition (retain, archive, or destroy)
            6. Conduct privacy audits
            7. Conduct security audits
Domain 3 – Data Analytics and Use (14-18%)
      Tasks:
            1. Abstract data
            2. Analyze data
            3. Analyze privacy audits
            4. Analyze security audits
            5. Report data (e.g. registries, core measures)
            6. Compile healthcare statistics and reports
            7. Analyze healthcare statistics (e.g. census productivity, delinquency rates, resource allocation)
Domain 4 – Revenue Cycle Management (14-18%)
      Tasks:
            1. Code medical record documentation
            2. Query clinicians
            3. Conduct utilization review
            4. Manage denials (e.g. coding or insurance)
            5. Conduct coding audits
            6. Provide coding education

       7. Monitor DNFB

       8. Analyze the case mix

Domain 5 – Compliance (13-17%)

    Tasks:

       1. Refine departmental procedures

       2. Perform quality assessments

       3. Assess risks (e.g. patient care, legal)

       4. Report health information noncompliance

       5. Ensure HIM compliance (e.g. coding, ROI, CDI)

       6. Maintain standards for HIM functions (e.g. chart completion, coding accuracy, ROI turnaround time, departmental workflow)

       7. Monitor regulatory changes for timely and accurate implementation

Domain 6 – Leadership (11-15%)

    Tasks:

       1. Provide education regarding HIM laws and regulations

       2. Review HIM processes

       3. Create or modify HIM policies

       4. Create or modify HIM procedures

       5. Establish standards for HIM functions (e.g. chart completion, coding accuracy, ROI, turnaround time, departmental workflow)

       6. Collaborate with other departments for HIM interoperability

       7. Provide HIM technical expertise

The curriculum for accredited programs can be found at:

file:///C:/Users/rrascon/Downloads/RHIT%20Content%20Outline_Effective_10022017%20(2).pdf

ASSOCIATE IN APPLIED SCIENCE
HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The purpose of this program is to prepare individuals for employment as health information technicians. Graduates of this program to prepare for a position in the medical records department of health care institutions such as hospitals, nursing facilities, health maintenance organizations. Graduates will be prepared in organizing, analyzing, and technically evaluating medical records according to established standards. In addition, compilation of statistics, coding of information, filing and abstracting medical records, release of information to third parties, quality assurance and supervising the daily operations of a medical record department.

The program is accredited the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM). Graduates from this program are eligible to sit for the national certification examination to become a Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT).

MEDICAL CODING CERTIFICATE

A Medical Coder is an individual who analyzes medical records and assigns codes to index diagnosis and procedures to support clinical care; to assist medical research in hospitals, physician offices, clinics and other health care facilities; and to provide information for reimbursement purposes. Institutions for quality assurance activities and case mix management use codes internally. A Medical Coder is an important member of the health care team and contributes in varied health care settings, both inpatient and outpatient.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY:

Curriculum is a dynamic process, creating a dialogue between faculty and students that encourages a shared responsibility for learning. Although the acquisition of content knowledge and technical skills are expected outcomes, the focus is on the development of critical thinking skills, personal growth and awareness of global issues essential for lifelong learning. It recognizes that learning occurs both in and out of the classroom, with students and faculty challenged to question, analyze, problem-solve and be open to differing views.

PROGRAM ACCREDITATION:

The Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM) accredits the Health Information Management Program.

DESCRIPTION OF PROFESSION:

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

GOALS AND STANDARDS:

The primary goal of the Health Information Management program at Vernon College is to establish and maintain an educational program that is accredited and of the highest quality and which graduate.

Students who have developed the professional and personal attitude and skills necessary to successfully pass the national examination and begin their career as Health Information Technicians.

To achieve this goal, an appropriate curriculum have been developed for the Health Information Management Program, which enables the student to demonstrate the Domains, Tasks, and Subtasks for Health Information Technicians.

The standards include:
1. To provide the academic foundation necessary to ensure that graduates are able to successfully perform the Entry Level Competencies of the HIM profession as periodically defined by nationally accepted standards of practitioner roles and functions.
   - Program graduates will take and successfully pass the AHIMA registration exam.
   - The exam pass rate will equal or exceed the national mean.
   - Students will successfully meet the recommended performance criteria established for all professional practice experiences.
   - Students will successfully pass each professional course demonstrating achievement of course objectives and identified *Entry-Level Competencies*.
   .
2. To provide a quality program in Health Information Management supported by a comprehensive curriculum based on continuous assessment, modification, and reanalysis.
   - The program will receive an above average or excellent ranking by students and graduates on evaluation documents.

- The curriculum will be established based on the most recent competencies of the HIM profession.
- The curriculum will include all required knowledge cluster content as identified by CAHIIM in the model curriculum.
- The program will provide a student-centered learning environment to enhance student engagement in self-directed learning.
- Faculty will demonstrate a positive attitude toward students.
- Program facilities and instructional resources are available to adequately support the HIM curriculum.
- PPE assignments reflect a variety and depth of professional practice experiences.
- Students will be assigned projects that foster problem-solving and critical thinking.

3. To employ and foster the development of faculty who demonstrate competence in current and emerging HIM professional practice particularly related to areas of instructional responsibility.
   - Instructional faculty within the HIM program shall hold a credential of RHIT and have a bachelor's degree and/or have practical experience in their area of instructional responsibility.
   - HIM program faculty will participate in at least one campus faculty development activities yearly.
   - HIM program faculty will incorporate relevant new and emerging information in the content of appropriate courses.
   - HIM program faculty will be active in either/or the local, state, and national professional organization.
   - All program faculty will receive a satisfactory or better on all evaluation documents.
4. To monitor and be receptive to the needs of the community of interest served by the Health Information Management program at Vernon College.
   - Program graduates will be employed in the HIM profession within 3 months of graduation.
   - Program graduates will sit for the registration exam within 4 months of graduation.
   - The HIM program will provide educational and networking opportunities to its community of interest on an as needed or biannual basis.
   - HIM program faculty will actively contribute as elected and/or appointed members of local, state, and national professional organizations.
   - Practicing HIM professionals will be utilized as members of the HIM Advisory Committee, adjunct faculty, PPE Supervisors, and a source of program resources.
   - Recruitment activities will be done on an ongoing basis to recruit high school, transfer, and non-traditional students.
   - Students and Graduates will demonstrate professional and ethical behavior in the workplace.
   - The program will remain with accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education.

ADMISSION POLICY:

Admission to the Health Information Management Program follows the accepted practices of Vernon College as stated in the Vernon College General Catalog.

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

The College commits itself to a continuing program to assure that unlawful discrimination does not occur in the services it renders to the public.

Background checks are required prior to enrolling in any HITT class. Any felony and/or misdemeanor convection may hinder a student from completing the HITT Degree or Certificate Program

PROGRAM ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
Health Information Management

1. Complete Vernon College admission procedure. The College must accept a student before being accepted by the Health Information Management program. *Admission to the college does not guarantee admission to the program.*
2. Texas Success Initiative complete in Reading, Writing and Mathematics.
3. Attend mandatory counseling session with Health Information Management Program Coordinator before enrolling in any course(s).
4. Complete BIOL 2401 with a grade of C or better prior to admission to the program
5. Information regarding program standards and policies is printed in the *Health Information Management Program Student Handbook.*

To facilitate the development and mastery of skills required of a Registered Health Information Technician, the following guidelines are mandated for all students enrolled:

I. *Program Eligibility*

Students should take the pre-requisite classes BIOL 2401, and complete the TSI Math/English Assessment (unless otherwise exempt) for placement in the appropriate level of Math and English courses.

Once pre-requisites are complete, or you are finishing your last semester of pre-requisites students should complete an application. The application contains a number of forms including; photo release, Duties Acknowledgement Form, Commitment to Student Success. Students will also be interviewed by HIM faculty/staff prior to admission into the program.

If students are under current discipline action by the college, they are not eligible for admission into the program.

II. *Program Progression*

Students' progress through the AAS HIM curriculum should be in accordance with the Vernon College catalog. A student should plan to accomplish at least 24 hours in an academic year until program completion. Any student who is unable to complete the semester due to a temporary disability or condition may rejoin the program the next semester. A grade of F or W may be applied, depending on the circumstance.

Students must maintain a GPA of 2.0 or better. Any student who falls below that number will not receive a permit for PPE placement.

The scheduled times for academic classes are listed in the college class schedule. All courses for the degree are offered in an online format/face-to-face format. The Professional Practice Education component requires the student to participate at a healthcare facility. Student participation based on instructor syllabus and web course guidelines are mandatory. The program adheres to a Code of Conduct and students are required to follow those policies.

III. *Program Expectations*

Students are committed to timely completion of the program, once admitted. Students conduct themselves in a professional manner, regardless of setting. Students will sit for the RHIT exam or continue their education.

IV. Grades

The final grade for HIM classes will be determined by the method shown on the syllabus/outline. The final grade for professional practice experience practice will be determined by the method shown on the professional practice experience packet for the course.

The grading scale for all Health Information Management Program courses is as follows:

    i.   100 - 90   A
   ii.   89 - 80   B
  iii.   79 – 70   C*
  iv.   69 -60   D
   v.   Below 60   F

The minimum competency level in all HIM courses is a grade of a C. Students scoring a grade of "D" or "F" in any HIM course may not progress to the next course(s) until that course is repeated, and passed with a minimum grade of C.

V. Academic Honesty

See Vernon College Catalog under Academic Policies and Information, http://vernoncollege.smartcatalogiq.com/2018-2019/General-Catalog/Academic-Policies-and-Information/Academic-Integrity-Policy for scholastic dishonesty information.

VI. Code of Conduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Below are a few guidelines that apply to the Health Information Management program:

Teamwork

Being part of a team means performing alongside persons of varying ethnic backgrounds, national origin, political and religious beliefs, as well as other differences. By communicating effectively, and working together smoothly, the group carries out its goals successfully. Many studies show that collaborative efforts improve outcomes, and therefore teamwork is often superior to individual efforts.

The cooperative and collaborative group is one that we will model in health information courses. **"Team First"** is our goal in order to foster a learning environment of excellence. Here are some dos and don'ts regarding teamwork in the program:

Do: Put the needs of the group first.

Don't: Ask for special considerations.

Do: Speak to fellow students in a respectful manner.

Don't: Bring personal feelings about other students to the academic setting.

Do: Tell someone appropriately, if you think, the group is being negatively impacted by their behavior.

Don't: Criticize an individual.

Do:	Help fellow students struggling to understand a difficult concept.
Don't:	Add extraneous information that confuses the topic.
Do:	Stop and ask relevant questions-- if you do not understand, chances are others are wondering the same thing!
Don't:	Waste group time on off topic questions or issues that involve only you.

VII.   *Chain of Command*

Students in the program will follow the chain of command for grievances. ***Failure to respect the chain of command is considered unprofessional behavior.***

The chain of command is as follows:
1. Take a complaint to the instructor first. ***It is unprofessional to discuss issues or problems with those that are not directly involved.***
2. The instructor will follow-up and give you a report.
3. *If the grievance remains unresolved, take the issue to the Program Director. After a period of investigation, the appropriate person will report to you on the issue.
4. If the situation remains unresolved, contact the Dean of Student Services.
5. In the event that an individual is believed to have violated the code of conduct, that individual is subject to disciplinary action. The individual may be asked to participate in specific training geared toward helping the individual deal with difficult or challenging situations more appropriately. Repeated incidences may result in written advising, and/or (depending upon the seriousness of the problems) dismissal from the program.

Refer to
- http://vernoncollege.smartcatalogiq.com/2018-2019/General-Catalog/Student-Services/Student-Conduct

CURRICULUM:

An Associate of Applied Science degree with a major in Health Information Management is granted by the College, after completion of the course requirements in a two-year program. The student will be required to successfully complete all courses listed in the degree plan, which is given to the student at the time of advising with the Program Coordinator at Vernon College.

A minimum grade of "C" must be earned in each course under the HITT Program. In order to enroll for the clinical course, the student must have an overall grade point average of at least 2.0. Students should be advised that many transfer institutions may require a higher GPA for successful transfer of HITT courses.

Vernon College Health Information Management Program will not accept completion of AHIMA Independent Study modules or any other coding certification course(s) for academic credit for any HITT course.

HITT Course Schedule and Progression		AAS	AAS
Course	Description	1st Year	2nd Year
Prerequisite BIOL 2401	**Anatomy & Physiology I**	4Hours	
First Fall Year AAS		**12Hours**	
ENGL 1301	Composition I	X	
GOVT 2305	Federal Government (Federal Constitution and Topics)	X	
SPCH 1315	Public Speaking	X	
MATH 1314/1332	College Algebra or Contemporary Mathematics	X	
First Spring Year AAS		**12Hours**	
HITT 1305	Medical Terminology	X	
HITT 1211	Health Information Systems	X	
BIOL 2402	**Anatomy & Physiology II**	X	
SFF>	Humanities/Fine Arts	X	
First Summer Year AAS		**5Hours**	
HITT 1341	Coding and Classification Systems	X	
HITT 2260	Clinical	X	
Second Fall Year AAS			**12Hours**
HITT 1301	**Health Data Content and Structure**		X
HITT 1353	Legal and Ethical Aspects of Health Information		X
HITT 2335	Coding and Reimbursement Methodologies		X
HITT 2339	Health Information Organization and Supervision		X
Second Spring Year AAS			**15Hours**
MDCA 1302	**Human Disease/Pathophysiology**		X
HITT 1345	Health Care Delivery Systems		X
HITT 2361	HIT Clinical II		X
HITT 2340	Advanced Medical Billing and Reimbursement		X
HITT 2343	Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement		X
Total HITT Degree hours 60			

NOTE: Bolded courses are prerequisites NOTICE: Courses are offered in the semester listed. NOT ALL COURSES are offered each semester.

Coding Certificate Full Time
Prerequisite BIOL 2401 Anatomy & Physiology I (4 hours)
Spring (13 Hours)
HITT 1305
HITT 1211
HITT 1345
BIOL 2402
Summer (3 Hours)
HITT 1341
Fall (12 Hours)
HITT 1301
HITT 2335
HITT 1353
HITT 2340
Spring(5 Hours)
HITT 2260
MDCA 1302
Total Hours 36

CLINICAL FEES:

Liability Insurance: $20.00 Included in Tuition (charged once each academic year)
Background Check: $4.00 Not Included in Tuition
HIM ID Badge: $3.00 Not Included in Tuition

Clinical fees are subject to change without notice.

PROGRAM ATTENDANCE POLICY:

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

Attendance requirements are equivalent to those imposed upon employees in business and industry. Prompt attendance in all classes, lectures, labs, and clinical assignments is expected of the student. The Program Instructor will keep attendance and all absences and tardies will be recorded.

Vernon College believes that learning cannot take place if the student is not in attendance. Therefore, the student must be in attendance.

 THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ATTENDANCE LIES WITH THE STUDENT

CLASSROOM ABSENCES:

No more than (3) non-exempt classroom sessions can be missed per semester.

Any non-exempt absence that occurs beyond the maximum (3) allowed per semester may affect the final letter grade by one letter grade (A will become B,ect.).

Failure to comply with the classroom attendance policy may result in the student being placed on program probation.

CLINCIAL ABSENCES:

No more than (1) clinical session can be missed per semester.

Any absence that occurs beyond the maximum (1) allowed per semester will administrative withdrawal from the clinical course.

If absent for more than two consecutive classroom or clinical days due to illness, the student must present a written statement from a physician before returning to class or clinical for physical clearance.

EXEMPTIONS:

Absences due to jury duty, military duty, school sanctioned activities, subpoena, job related exams, job interviews, bereavement leave, job orientations, and professional conferences are exempt and do not count against attendance.

Written documentation may be required to receive an exemption and exemptions not listed will be awarded at the discretion of the Program Instructor.

Students who are absent during clinical must notify the clinical site and the Program Instructor before clinical duty time.

Students should never leave the class or clinical site without notifying the Program Instructor.

TARDIES:

The following infractions will constitute a tardy:

Not being in class at the scheduled start time, leaving class early, or leaving clinical early.
Three (3) tardies will count as an absence.
If the student is more than one (1) hour late for class or clinical, it will count as an absence.

The Program Instructor will document and record all tardies in the attendance record.

PROGRAM EVALUATION AND GRADING POLICY:

Students will be given a detailed course syllabus and course outline for all courses within the program. The grades for each course will be determined according to guidelines in the course outline. The instructor will verbally read the course outline and syllabus for each course, each semester, to reduce any misunderstanding or confusion about how grades are earned.

Written assignments and written examinations will be given to evaluate the student's knowledge and retention of the program curriculum. Courses may contain additional assignments such as term papers or projects to provide re-enforcement of course objectives.
All exams/homework/lab completed late will have an automatic 50% penalty. Late work is only accepted the day following the due date. Any test not taken or homework not turned in to the instructor will receive a grade of zero. If a student is having difficulty locating an assignment or exam, it is important to notify the instructor at the time, prior to expiration of the due date. It is imperative that students keep up and submit all assignments on or before the due date through Canvas. Assignments/exams/labs will be removed one day following the due date, and will not be available for submission.

Please do not wait until the last minute to try to complete required course work. Computers and computer networks are not always reliable.

Assignments include written assignments such as homework, term papers, projects, tests, quizzes, and any other graded project assigned by the instructor(s).

Clinical grades are based on student performance, behavior, attendance and weekly written summary reports. The clinical supervisor determines the grade after observation of student performance.

The Program Coordinator will keep all grades and written tests on file. Students will be regularly informed of their grades and students are encouraged to meet with the Program Coordinator if grades are not meeting the program standards.

All grades are the final decision of the instructor; the student has the right to appeal any grade they feel is not fair through the academic grievance policy.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Preamble. Vernon College is a comprehensive community college that promotes a culture of success for all who are a part of the institution. It is in this learning environment that the ethical growth and development of students can best be facilitated. The success of their experiences at Vernon College is contingent on the existence of an environment that requires adherence to a set of values that includes but is not limited to honesty, fairness, excellence, freedom, responsibility, achievement, civility, and community. Therefore, behaviors that contradict these ideals are unacceptable and will promote values that are in opposition to our mission and vision for the future. Academic integrity is the foundation of the respect and worth of our instructional efforts including the degrees and certificates we award.

Specific Violations of Academic Integrity. Violations of academic integrity are serious academic violations and will not be tolerated. Violations of academic integrity and forms of scholastic dishonesty include but are not limited to the following:

Plagiarism, collusion, cheating and other acts designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student. "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means someone else's work and then submitting that work for credit as if it were one's own. It also includes the failure to properly document sources used in research.

"Collusion" includes, but it is not limited to, unauthorized collaboration with another person in the preparation of an academic assignment offered for credit.

"Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:

1.   copying from another student's work, e.g., test paper or assignment, or allowing another student to copy from one's own without authority;

2.   possessing any materials during a test that are not authorized by the instructor, such as class notes, specifically designed "crib notes," calculators, electronic devices, etc.;

3.   using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or in part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer programs;

4.   collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;

5.   discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;

6.   divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructor has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or kept by the student.

7.   substituting for another person or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take the course, to take a test, or to complete any course-related assignment;

8.   registering for and taking a class for which the student does not have the formally required prerequisite classes or a written waiver from a Division Chair or Instructional Dean;

9.   falsifying academic records, including, but not limited to, altering or assisting in the altering of any official record of the College.

Sanctions Related to Violations of Academic Integrity. The sanctions for academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

1. a grade of zero on an exam or assignment;

2. an "F" in a course;
3. administrative withdrawal from a class with a possible recommendation of disciplinary sanctions.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

All information gained in the Health Information Management Program relating to patients, physicians or private hospital business is considered confidential information. Disclosure of any confidential information is cause for immediate dismissal from the Health Information Management Program and Vernon College. Improper Disclosure of protected health information (PHI) is a violation of federal regulation known as (HIPAA) Health Information Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 and is ground for prosecution.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT:

As a Health Information Management student at Vernon College you are expected to follow the American Health Information Management Association's Code of Ethics and to act in a professional manner at all times. You will respect the confidentiality of any information that you might acquire while a student in any health care facility. If a student should participate in any unethical, unprofessional or disruptive behavior, the student will be removed from the clinical site and be subject to dismissal from the program and/or the College.

CODE OF ETHICS

Preamble

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

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

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

Purpose of the American Health Information Management Association Code of Ethics

The HIM professional has an obligation to demonstrate actions that reflect values, ethical principles, and ethical guidelines. The American Health Information Management Association, (AHIMA) Code of Ethics sets forth these values and principles to guide conduct. The code is relevant to all AHIMA members and CCHIIM credentialed HIM professionals and students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which

they work, or the populations they serve. These purposes strengthen the HIM professional's efforts to improve overall quality of healthcare.

The AHIMA Code of Ethics serves seven purposes:

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

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

Code of Ethics

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

Health information management professionals:

 I.   *Advocate, uphold and defend the individual's right to privacy and the doctrine of confidentiality in the use and disclosure of information.*
 II. *Put service and the health and welfare of persons before self-interest and conduct oneself in the practice of the profession so as to bring honor to oneself, their peers, and to the health information management profession.*
 III. *Preserve, protect, and secure personal health information in any form or medium and hold in the highest regards health information s and other information of a confidential nature, obtained in an official capacity taking into account the applicable statutes and regulations.*
 IV. *Refuse to participate in or conceal unethical practices or procedures and report such practices.*
 V.   *Advance health information management knowledge and practice through continuing education, research, publications, and presentations.*
 VI. *Recruit and mentor students, peers and colleagues to develop and strengthen professional workforce.*
 VII. *Represent the profession to the public in a positive manner. accurately to the public.*
 VIII.*Perform honorably health information management association responsibilities, either appointed or elected, and preserve the confidentiality of any privileged information made known in any official capacity.*
 IX. *State truthfully and accurately one's credentials, professional education, and experiences.*
 X.   *Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration in situations supporting health information practice.*
 XI. *Respect the inherent dignity and worth of every person.*

How to Interpret the Code of Ethics

The following ethical principles are based on the core values of the American Health Information Management Association and apply to all health information management professionals. Guidelines included for each ethical

principle are a non-inclusive list of behaviors and situations that can help to clarify the principle. They are not to be meant as a comprehensive list of all situations that can occur.

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

A health information management professional **shall**:

1.1. Safeguard all confidential patient information to include, but not limited to, personal, health, financial, genetic, and outcome information.

1.2. Engage in social and political action that supports the protection of privacy and confidentiality, and be aware of the impact of the political arena on the health information issues for the healthcare industry.

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

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

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

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

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

A health information management professional **shall**:

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

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

2.3. Anticipate, clarify, and avoid any conflict of interest, to all parties concerned, when dealing with consumers, consulting with competitors, in providing services requiring potentially

conflicting roles (for example, finding out information about one facility that would help a competitor), or serving the Association in a volunteer capacity. The conflicting roles or responsibilities must be clarified and appropriate action taken to minimize any conflict of interest.

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

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

A health information management professional **shall not**:

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

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

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

A health information management professional **shall**:

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

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

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

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

A health information management professional **shall:**

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

4.2. Take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues. If needed, utilize the Professional Ethics Committee Policies and Procedures for potential ethics complaints.

4.3. Be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for handling concerns about colleagues' unethical behavior. These include policies and procedures created by AHIMA,

licensing and regulatory bodies, employers, supervisors, agencies, and other professional organizations.

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

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

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

4.7. Cooperate with lawful authorities as appropriate.

A health information management professional **shall not**:

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

- Allowing patterns of optimizing or minimizing documentation and/or coding to impact payment
- Assigning codes without physician documentation
- Coding when documentation does not justify the diagnoses or procedures that have been billed
- Coding an inappropriate level of service
- Miscoding to avoid conflict with others
- Engaging in negligent coding practices
- Hiding or ignoring review outcomes, such as performance data
- Failing to report licensure status for a physician through the appropriate channels
- Recording inaccurate data for accreditation purposes
- Allowing inappropriate access to genetic, adoption, health, or behavioral health information
- Misusing sensitive information about a competitor
- Violating the privacy of individuals

Refer to the AHIMA Standards for Ethical Coding for additional guidance.

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

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

A health information management professional **shall**:

5.1. Develop and enhance continually professional expertise, knowledge, and skills (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision). Contribute to the knowledge base of health information management and share one's knowledge related to practice, research, and ethics.

5.2. Base practice decisions on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge relevant to health information management and health information management ethics.

5.3. Contribute time and professional expertise to activities that promote respect for the value, integrity, and competence of the health information management profession. These activities may include teaching, research, consultation, service, legislative testimony, advocacy, presentations in the community, and participation in professional organizations.

5.4. Engage in evaluation and research that ensures the confidentiality of participants and of the data obtained from them by following guidelines developed for the participants in consultation with appropriate institutional review boards.

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

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

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

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

A health information management professional **shall**:

6.1. Provide directed practice opportunities for students.

6.2. Be a mentor for students, peers, and new health information management professionals to develop and strengthen skills.

6.3. Be responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries for students, staff, peers, colleagues, and members within professional organizations.

6.4. Evaluate students' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful when functioning as educators or clinical internship supervisors.

6.5. Evaluate staff's performance in a manner that is fair and respectful when functioning in a supervisory capacity.

6.6. Serve an active role in developing HIM faculty or actively recruiting HIM professionals.

A health information management professional **shall not**:

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

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

A health information management professional **shall:**

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

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

A health information management professional **shall**:

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

8.2. Uphold the decisions made by the association.

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

8.4. Disclose any real or perceived conflicts of interest.

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

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

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

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

A health information management professional **shall**:

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

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

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

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

X. *Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration in situations supporting health information practice.*

A health information management professional **shall**:

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

10.2. Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration in situations supporting health information practice**.**

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

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

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

A health information management professional **shall**:

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

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

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

11.4. Ensure all voices are listened to and respected.

Acknowledgement

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

Resources

National Association of Social Workers. Code of Ethics. 1999. Available online on the NASW web site.

AHIMA. Code of Ethics, 1957, 1977, 1988, 1998, and 2004.

AHIMA. Standards for Ethical Coding. 2008. Available in the AHIMA Body of Knowledge.

Harman, L.B., ed. *Ethical Challenges in the Management of Health Information,* 2nd ed. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett, 2006.

McWay, D.C. *Legal and Ethical Aspects of Health Information Management*, 3rd ed. Clifton Park, NY: Cengage Learning, 2010.

Revised & adopted by AHIMA House of Delegates – (October 2, 2011)

PROGRAM DRESS CODE POLICY:

🞧 All clinical students will abide by the host facility dress code standard for each clinical.

GROOMING POLICY:

🞧 Good personal hygiene must and will be maintained at all times by the students enrolled in the program.
🞧 Use of deodorant is required.
🞧 Special precautions should be taken to prevent halitosis (bad breath). Those students who smoke should take special measures in this area.
🞧 Should poor hygiene be noted, the Program Coordinator or Instructor will counsel the student.
🞧 Perfumes and colognes may be used in moderation.
🞧 Hair should be kept neat and clean.
🞧 Facial hair must be trimmed according to clinical site policy.

Social Media Policy

The explosion of social media to include, but not limited to; FaceBook, Twitter, YouTube, Smart phones, and various discussion boards/blogs has created an increase in liability for violations of the federal Health Insurance and Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA). This law establishes a felony penalty for violations of patient privacy at any level of care. Thus, Vernon College and the Health Information Management program will have a zero tolerance for violations of patient privacy via any social media outlet.

Vernon College maintains a FaceBook page and students are encouraged to access the page. It will contain information about the college, activities, and important information to all students.

The Health Information Management does NOT maintain a FaceBook page. The VC HIM program webpage can be accessed http://www.vernoncollege.edu/health-information-technology-home and it will contain program information, photos, and updates about student activities.

Students are reminded that employers are increasingly asking for access to Social Media outlets such as FaceBook as a condition of potential and continuing employment. The Allied Health Profession requires the utmost in professional and ethical behavior and students are encouraged to ensure their Social Media Outlets do not contain images or content that may be perceived as negative, unprofessional, and/or unethical. The Vernon College HIM Program recommends students maintain a professional, ethical, and positive image through Social Media Outlets to ensure success in the program and employment upon graduation.

The policy contained below should not be deviated from at any time during the program year and violations may result in administrative withdrawal from the program as defined in the HIM Program Handbook. Depending upon the violation of patient privacy violation, federal felony charges could be filed against the offending student.

1) Vernon College is not responsible for any student posting private information through any social media outlet. The student assumes all responsibility for their posting. Disclosures of private health information may result in administrative withdrawal from the program and/or potential prosecution.
2) In order to exemplify professional and ethical standards of conduct, and to comply with HIPAA, students should NOT post any of the following information in any social media outlet:
   a. Any identifying patient information to include; patient's name, surgeon's name, surgical procedure being performed, patient tattoos, piercing, or other identifying birthmarks.

b. No information will be posted as to the clinical site the student is performing clinical practicum to include; information listed in 2) a, clinical staff preceptors, the student's opinion of the clinical site's level of care or system of operation within the department. Note: If a clinical site has a current or develops a Social Media Policy, the student will be expected to follow the policy.
c. Students should not post negative comments about fellow students, the institution, and its employees. If a student believes a problem exists the student should seek the advice of the HIM Program Coordinator and/or the Associate Dean of Career and Technology Education, or the Dean of Instructional Services to resolve the issue.

3) Students may be asked to provide access to their Social Media outlets such as FaceBook if a violation has been reported to include, but not limited to:
   a. If any clinical site, students in the program, or the general public reports a potential privacy violation.
   b. A college employee reports a violation to the HIM Program Coordinator or any other Vernon College department such as Student Services.
   c. A graduate of the HIM Program reports a potential violation to the HIM Program Coordinator or Vernon College.

CELL PHONE AND PAGER POLICY:

Students will turn their cell phones and pagers to the off position while in class and clinical. These electronic devices are a disruption to the learning environment and will not be tolerated. Students may access their electronic devices on breaks and lunch, but not during class or clinical instruction.

TELEPHONE AND EMERGENCY MESSAGES:

Program telephones are not for student use and are for official college business. In the event of an emergency, the switchboard operator will notify Student Services and the student will be notified immediately of the emergency.

Students should ensure the number given to contact them in case of an emergency is the main CCC campus number 940-696-8752. The student may be in class, lab or clinical but, Student Services will access the student's schedule each semester to aide in timely delivery of urgent messages.

STUDENT PARKING POLICY:

Century City Center parking for students is located in two parking areas, with one in the front of the building and one in the rear of the building. Students are reminded to not park in designated handicap parking without the proper permit or their vehicle may be towed/ticketed.

While on Vernon campus, all students must park in designated student parking. Students should refer to the Vernon College General Catalog/Student Handbook for parking/driving rules/fees. While at clinical sites, students will park in public parking areas and will be responsible for any parking fees. Students will be responsible for their own transportation during program hours.

SAFETY POLICY:

All students are encouraged to be actively enrolled in a health insurance plan and have a personal physician for treatment of illnesses, accidents or injuries.

Vernon College, the Health Information Management Program, its' faculty, and all clinical providers are NOT responsible for any accident or injury occurring while enrolled in this program. Any accident or injury incurred is the responsibility of the student.

The student will follow facility policy and provide necessary documentation in reporting accidents or injuries.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY:

Vernon College desires and will do everything possible to maintain a drug free learning environment. Students should refer to the Vernon College General Catalog/Student Handbook for the complete drug and alcohol policy.

The Health Information Management Program will have a zero tolerance policy regarding drug and alcohol use during class and clinical, and reserves the right to ask students to submit to a drug test if the situation warrants.

A refusal or a positive drug test will result in immediate administrative withdrawal from the program.

SECURITY AND VIDEO SURVEILLANCE:

The Century City Center has installed security measures to aid in providing a safe environment for the students and faculty. Video cameras are installed throughout the building at exists and in hallways and the video feed is monitored during school hours. Faculty offices and classrooms are equipped with emergency alarms as well.

Entrance and exits are automatically locked and unlocked according to school hours. These doors should not be propped open at any time due to possibly setting off the security alarm. In the case of an emergency these doors may be automatically locked by security and while no one can enter the building, students will be able to exit the building.

Emergency exits are clearly marked and students should not use these exits unless an actual emergency exists.

Campus Police:

Vernon College employs a full time campus police officer for your security. The officer has an office on both the Vernon Campus and Century City Center and is available for any safety or security issues which may arise. Private Security agencies may be used to provide additional support to the campus police department.

Vernon College wants to provide the safest and most secure environment for your learning experience. It is highly recommended that students report any suspicious activity or persons to faculty or campus police. Any individual making threatening statements or demonstrating stalking type behavior should be reported immediately as well.

GRADUATION:

Vernon College recognizes the successful completion of the program requirements by awarding a Certificate of Completion for Coding; or an Associate Degree for Applied Science Health Information Management. The

student is eligible for graduation upon successful completion of entire program, students will be responsible for completing the application for graduation which is available from the Office of Admissions and Records.

NATIONAL CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION:

Graduates of the HIM Associate Degree Program are eligible to sit for the Registered Health Information Technician Certification.

Certification provides proof to employers, peers, other health care professionals, and the public that the certified individual has met the national standards of knowledge and skill that underlies Health Information.

The fee for the National Examination is: $229

Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT)

Member	$229
Non-Member	$299

Contact Program Instructor or AHIMA website at www.ahima.org for the RHIT Candidate Handbook complete with certification exam application.

The exam fee is included in the HITT 2361 course fees. Clinical. Students are required to apply for the exam within 30 days of graduation to be reimbursed testing fee. It is strongly recommended that the graduate take the national certification examination within 90 days of graduation, as pass rates are higher immediately following graduation.

ORGANIZATIONS:

AHIMA
American Health Information Management Association
233 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 2150
Chicago, IL 60601-5800
(312) 233-1100
www.ahima.org
Students currently enrolled in the Vernon College HIM Program are eligible to join AHIMA at a discounted membership fee.

Student Membership Fee: $49.00 is included when registering for HITT 1301 and HITT 2343

TXHIMA
Texas Health Information Management Association
P.O. Box 14423
Austin, TX 78761-4423
(512) 465-1077
www.txhima.org

No membership fee if a member of AHIMA.

INSTRUCTOR AND STUDENT CONFERENCES:

The HIM Program Coordinator will conduct a one on one conference each semester, with all students enrolled in the HIM Program to assess the student's performance in meeting the program's standards. Students will be responsible for keeping scheduled conference appointments and should remember the conference is provided to aide the student in successful completion of the program requirements.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING:

The Program Coordinator is the academic advisor for students enrolled in the Health Information Management Program.

Vernon College provides academic counseling and guidance in the Student Services Department, and students are encouraged to utilize these services as needed.

Students are encouraged to seek counseling for any issues that may be affecting their educational goals. Program Instructors will refer students to Student Services for assistance in finding services needed to help the student overcome any issues affecting their academic progress.

The Program Instructors may refer any student to counseling within the Vernon College system deemed necessary.

PASS DEPARTMENT AND LIBRARY:

The PASS (Proactive Assistance for Student Success) Department provides a variety of services for Vernon College students including tutoring services, the Office for Students with Disabilities and the New Beginnings Program. The students are encouraged to visit the PASS Department, meet the coordinators, and learn about the services available at no charge to the student.

Vernon College provides a modern library with a librarian to assist students in their educational goals. Reference texts, books, periodicals, and computers with Internet accessed databases are available to the student. Computer stations and printers are provided for students who need to research and write assignments in the event the student does not have access to the Internet at home. The student is encouraged to visit the library, meet the librarian, and learn about the services available at no charge to the student.

OFFICE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITES (OSD):

Upon admission, a student who discloses a properly certified disability will receive reasonable accommodation but must be able to perform essential function of the curriculum and meet the standards described herein for the program in which the student is enrolled. Possible accommodations include opportunities for individual and group counseling, linkages to community services, career counseling, testing and other academic accommodations. Students seeking accommodations should initiate their request to the Special Services Assistant at (940) 552-6291 ext. 2325 (Vernon Campus). *Refer to*: http://vernoncollege.smartcatalogiq.com/2018-2019/General-Catalog/Special-Services

STUDENT TECHNICAL STANDARDS:

The goal of Vernon College's Health Information Management (HIM) Program is to prepare students for the practice of the profession of health information management. Modern allied health education requires that the

accumulation of scientific knowledge be accompanied by the simultaneous acquisition of essential skills, functions and professional attitudes and behavior.

Students in the HIM Program of the College must possess the following general qualities:

- Critical Thinking
- Emotional Stability
- Maturity
- Sound Judgment
- Empathy
- Physical and Mental stamina
- Ability to learn and function in a wide variety of didactic and clinical settings

Graduates of the HIM Program must have the minimal skills, essentials, functions and knowledge to function in a broad variety of clinical settings.

Students in the health information management program must have the following minimum abilities:

- Ability to acquire and apply information from classroom instruction, laboratory experience, independent learning and team projects.
- Ability to communicate effectively in English in an oral and written form with colleagues, clerical employees, and with other health care professionals as part of a health care team.
- Ability to communicate effectively in English in an oral and written form with patients, attorneys, workers' compensation representatives, insurance companies, other third party payers and other individuals and agencies who need information from patient records or databases maintained in health information departments.
- Ability to use computers and complete computer-based assignments.
- Ability to function (consult, negotiate, share) as part of a team.
- Ability to delegate.
- Ability to read materials used in HIM settings such as coding manuals, policies and procedures, patient medical records.
- Ability to calculate mathematical information such as hospital statistics, budgets, and productivity information.
- Manual dexterity necessary to file medical records and cards as well as assemble paper medical record forms.
- Visual ability and manual dexterity necessary to prepare office layouts and to design forms and computer screens.
- Ability to operate equipment, word processors, transcription equipment, electronic movable files, copiers, fax machines, telephones etc.
- Ability to synthesize information regarding health care outcomes for formal, verbal and/or written presentation to health care professionals.

PROGRAM DISCIPLINE POLICY:

The program strives to provide a safe and comfortable learning environment free of abuse and distractions. When students violate standards of conduct or act in a manner that disrupts the learning process, it is not fair to the students who do act appropriately. Students who do not comply with the policies of the program, college, and/or clinical facilities will face disciplinary action to encourage compliance.

The Program Coordinator will initiate disciplinary measures to prevent the violations from becoming excessive or detrimental to the student's progress in the program.

Individual counseling will occur with all violations; the student may be placed on program probation.

All violations resulting in disciplinary action and/or dismissal will be documented in the student's permanent record. The student will be provided an opportunity to document their account of the violation(s) and this documentation will be retained in the student's record as well.

The disciplinary measures implemented are at the discretion of the Program Coordinator and in accordance with written program policies described within this handbook.

The student has access through the academic grievance policy for an appeals process for any disciplinary action the student feels is unwarranted or unfair. The academic grievance policy is outlined in the Vernon College Student Handbook.

Administrative withdrawal or dismissal from the program can occur for, but not limited to, the following reasons:

1. Excessive clinical or classroom tardiness
2. Obscene or crude language or gestures.
3. Displaying disrespectful attitude to faculty, clinical staff, peers
4. Failure to display team behavior concepts in classroom, lab, and clinical practicum
5. Disrupting class or clinical Includes receiving calls/texts from cellular telephones, eating in class, and leaving class before class is dismissed
6. Leaving clinical without prior permission from the program coordinator or site supervisor
7. Attending class, lab, or clinical smelling of alcohol. If this behavior occurs a second time, the student will be dismissed from the program
8. Failure to complete assignments or turn in assignments
9. Violation of the Social Media Policy
10. Failing to follow instructions
11. Repeating poor clinical practices/classroom/lab practices after being counseled by the instructor or coordinator

PROGRAM PROBATION POLICY:

Probation is a trial period in which the student must improve or be administratively withdrawn from the program. When the student reaches the probation stage, the violation or issue has reached a serious stage and the student should focus on correcting the area(s) of concern. If probation is ineffective and/or improvement does not occur, the student will be dismissed from the program.

The Program Instructor may place a student on probation for, but not limited to, any of the following reasons.

1. Academic failure
2. Unsatisfactory performance in the clinical setting
3. Unsafe or unprofessional practice
4. Inability to maintain physical or mental health necessary to function in the program
5. Attendance policy violation
6. Continued interference or disruption to the learning process

The student being placed on probation will be counseled, provided written notification of probation, and the length of probation for reason(s) listed. The student will have the opportunity to document their account of the issue and the probation form will be placed in the student's permanent record.

Students have access to an appeals process through the academic grievance policy as outlined in the Vernon College Student Catalog.
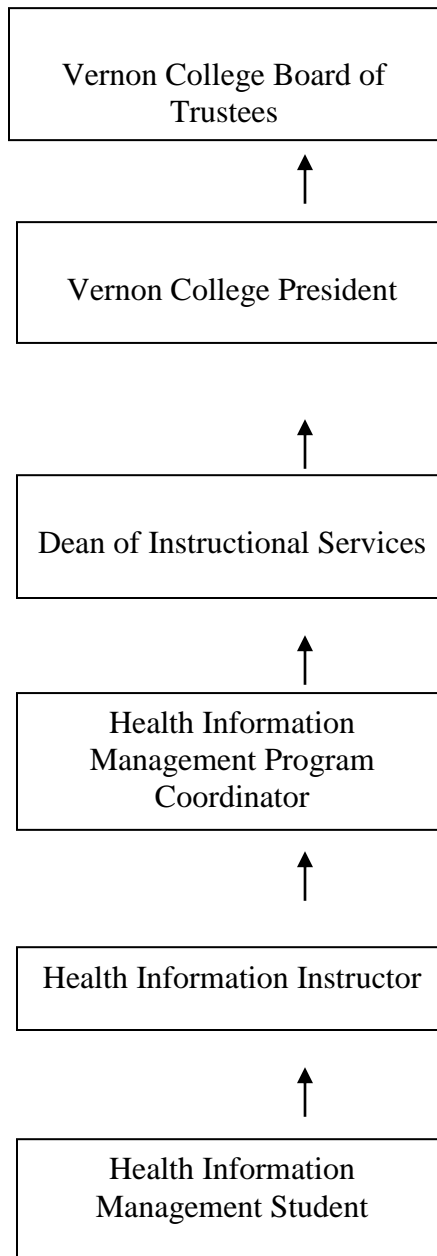
UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT:

Students may be administratively withdrawn from the program for unprofessional conduct: The term unprofessional conduct shall include but not be limited to:

1. Use of profanity.
2. Inaccurate recording, falsifying, or altering records.
3. Leaving a clinical assignment without properly advising appropriate personnel.
4. Violating the confidentiality of information or knowledge concerning the patient.
5. Discrimination in the rendering of patient care services as it relates to human rights and dignity of the individual.
6. Unauthorized Possession of firearms or other weapons in the college or clinical areas.
7. Exhibiting unethical or immoral behavior.
8. Insubordination, which is defined as "a willful or intentional disregard of the policies and reasonable instructions of the faculty".
9. Any activity that would JEOPARDIZE THE HEALTH AND WELFARE of a patient, the clinical staff, students, faculty and/or self.

The Program Instructor will initiate administrative withdrawal procedures for the violation(s) if the student fails to meet the rules, policies, and/or standards of the program.

Students have the right to appeal the decision of administrative withdrawal through the academic grievance policy as outlined in the Vernon College Student Handbook.

Program Organizational Chart

Vernon College Board of Trustees

↑

Vernon College President

↑

Dean of Instructional Services

↑

Health Information Management Program Coordinator

↑

Health Information Instructor

↑

Health Information Management Student

Commitment to Student Success

The Health Information Management Program Coordinator, Instructors, and Support Staff are committed to each student and make every effort to provide a training program that is designed to assist qualified, motivated students the opportunity for professional success. We will provide every student a learning environment to include classroom, skills labs, and clinical rotations. In addition, you will be provided frequent evaluations of your progress in the program and continuous advising of professional attributes necessary for success. In the HIM program, we gauge student success by determining workplace preparedness. It is our goal to ready our students for the real challenges of the ever changing Health Information field. In order to prepare students for success, we have expectations that must be met to facilitate a smooth, positive learning atmosphere.

We believe, however, that the student has the responsibility to actively participate in the learning process by completing assignments, utilizing the lab to improve skills, being on time, limiting absences, participating actively in class/clinical by asking questions, performing self-evaluations, accepting constructive criticism as a tool for improvement, setting personal goals for improvement and completing all requirements of the program.

Expectations for class involvement:

- Allow a professor 48 hours to respond to all questions and inquiries during the work week (MF). Instructors are not expected to work weekends; therefore, response time will be extended. Please plan your time accordingly. Requesting to turn in an assignment late, because you are waiting on a reply from your instructor will not be considered an acceptable excuse. Deadlines are deadlines and it is imperative you plan your time accordingly.
- Communication with instructor: State the problem concisely as well as how you would like them to help. Instructors should always be addressed in a respectful and professional manner. Making demands, criticizing, and "yelling" (writing in a bold font and in all capital letters) are not acceptable forms of communication.
- If the student has an issue with the class, he or she must contact the instructor, individually. No student shall appoint themselves "spokesperson" for the class.
- It is in good faith that faculty and students engage in the learning process and the activities provided by the instructor. It is expected that students perform in class with that philosophy in mind. Students are expected to make a good faith effort to read and understand the material and review all associated materials before contacting the instructor. The ability to research and discover answers independently is a skill used by health information professionals and requires practice. So, we are offering our students the opportunity to practice the skill before they venture out on their own. Any violation of these expectations may result in disciplinary action and possible dismissal from the HIM program.

I understand that the program will have the following requirements:

- I should be prepared to be on time and present for all classes, labs, clinical, or for any additional skills practice time.
- A **minimum** average **of 2-3 hours** of homework each night to include reading, written, and online research for **the entire program.**
- Additional skills practice time in the lab or at home to help me improve my performance may be needed. Labs will be required to acquire skills competency for skills evaluations.

- In order to continue in the program, I must pass all courses to include clinical skills performance criteria. Written daily assignments and classroom labs will help me be prepared and develop professionally is required at home or in allied health computer lab.
- I will be expected to schedule all appointments including doctor visits, children's doctor appointments, car maintenance, home repairs, etc. outside program class, lab, and clinical times to reduce absences.

I am willing to commit time, energies, and myself to study and prepare to become an allied health professional in health information management. I am willing to commit to becoming part of a team that provides knowledgeable, safe, efficient, and high quality patient care. I am willing to support my classmates as we develop into a team. I am willing to invest the time and energy necessary to meet and support my objectives and the objectives of the class and the program.

I have received a copy of this Acknowledgement and wish to continue in the process to become a student in the Health Information Management program.

_____

Student Signature /Date   Ruth Rascon – Program Director/ Date

DUTIES ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Duties and Responsibilities:
Technicians assemble patients' health information. They make sure that patients' initial medical charts are complete, that all forms are completed and properly identified and signed, and that all necessary information is in the computer. They regularly communicate with physicians and other health care professionals to clarify diagnoses or to obtain additional information. Increasingly, this information is maintained electronically in healthcare information systems. Health information management professionals capture, analyze and protect digital and traditional medical information vital to providing quality patient care.

Special Qualifications:
In addition to minimum requirements regarding Reading, Writing, and Math skills, the student must, unassisted:

1. Demonstrate ability to comprehend and interpret written material. Able to make appropriate judgment decisions.
2. Follow written and oral/verbal instructions in English. Possess short-term and long-term memory sufficient to perform duties, e.g., communicate with physicians and other health care professionals to clarify diagnoses or to obtain additional information; synthesize information from written material and apply the knowledge to various situations.
3. Demonstrate the use of positive coping skills during patient, staff, and faculty interactions.
4. Demonstrate the ability to develop critical thinking skills necessary for emergent and non-emergent situations

Psychomotor Qualifications:

1. Vision – normal, corrected.
2. Hearing -normal, corrected, or aid able. Hear and understand muffled communication without visualization of the communicator's mouth/lips.
3. Smell -able to detect odors sufficient to maintain environmental safety and patient needs.
4. Touch -normal tactile sensitivity. Manipulate supplies, and equipment with speed, dexterity, and good eye-hand coordination.

Physical Qualifications:

1. Able to stand, bend, stoop, and/or sit for long periods of time in one location with minimum/no breaks.
2. Able to lift a minimum of 25 pounds.
3. Ambulate/move around without assistive devices.
4. Able to assist with and/or lift, move, position, and manipulate office supplies with/without assistive devices.

Communication Qualifications:

1. The ability to interact and verbally communicate with others. Demonstrate interpersonal skills during patient, staff, and faculty interactions.
2. Demonstrate calm and effective responses, especially in emergency situations.
3. Knowledge of basic written, grammar, and spelling skills.
4. Ability to communicate and understand fluent English both verbally and in writing.

I have read the above and feel that it is within my ability to carry out the duties, responsibilities, and qualifications of a Health Information Manager. I do_____ do not_____ have any issues in meeting the above technical requirements.

SIGNATURE _____DATE _____

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Student Handbook of the Vernon College Health Information Technology Program

I, _____, have received the handbook for the Vernon College Health Information Management Program. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered about this program and the policies contained in this handbook. I further acknowledge my acceptance of the policies and procedures contained within.

_____

Student Signature   Date

_____

Print Name   Student ID

_____

Declared Major

_____

Program Coordinator Signature   Da