



HIM Reimagined

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CEE Approves 2018 Health Information Management Curricula Competencies

In response to the [HIM Reimagined](#) initiative to build a framework for health information management (HIM) transformation and position HIM professionals for the future, the Council for Excellence in Education (CEE) Curricula workgroup developed the 2018 Health Information Management Curricula Competencies. The new Curricula Competencies address HIMR recommendation number three: *Increase the opportunities for specialization across all levels of the HIM academic spectrum through curricula revision, while retaining a broad foundation in HIM and analytics.*

Revision Process

The Curricula Workgroup used a strategic approach to revise the curricula. The draft competencies were released in June 2018, followed by an open comment period. To enable efficient collection of public comments and feedback, the Curricula workgroup deployed an online survey tool for each degree level. Hundreds of HIM practitioners and educators shared their thoughts, observations and ideas with the survey tools to help further refine the curricula. The public comment period closed on September 14, 2018. Survey responses for each degree level were reviewed utilizing a quantitative and qualitative approach and prioritizing the curriculum revisions. While all competencies were reviewed, some competencies were identified as a high priority in addressing the revisions. An analysis of all the responses on the Bloom's level questions was completed to categorize each competency as a high, moderate, or low priority based on the percentage of responses indicating if the Bloom's taxonomy level was too high or too low. In addition, Competencies at the same Bloom's Taxonomy level across all degree levels were identified as a high priority. All individual comments were reviewed as each competency was reviewed individually within its own degree level and across all others. In addition to the survey results, feedback from the presentation of the curricula at AOE and during three webinars was taken into consideration. The CEE Curricula workgroup analyzed all feedback to revise and finalize the draft competencies and subsequently presented them to the CEE in December.

At their December meeting, the CEE formally approved the 2018 Health Information Management Curricula Competencies, which were shared with CAHIIM and CCHIIM to pursue the next steps under the recommendation. See the curricula competencies and all related resources here: <http://www.ahima.org/education/academic-affairs/academic-curricula>.

The following sections relate to the entire curriculum. Revisions related to individual competencies are provided with the revised curriculum.

Rationale

BROAD-BASED COMPETENCIES

The curriculum is designed with a priority on flexibility. It is critical for programs to have the freedom to create activities that reflect value in their unique service areas. Innovation and relevance are cornerstones to meaningful education and demonstrate value to employers. Though the competency may indicate a broad content area, the activity should be designed to align with the spirit of the competency and at the indicated level of learning. The Bloom's Taxonomy level listed with the competency is the level of accomplishment, not the level of introduction. It is also the minimum requirement. Educators may make the decision to teach a competency at a higher level, as appropriate for the program.



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Specific terminology has been removed from the competencies and has been placed in the curricular guidance. For example, broad terms such as laws and regulations have been used in place of the specific regulation. Names of laws and regulations, such as HIPAA are provided in the corresponding curriculum guidance.

STATISTICS IN THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

As HIM transitions to a data-focused profession, there is a need to increase the rigor surrounding concepts in statistics and provide a comfort level in the math-related area. Math Statistics refers to a more formal understanding of statistical competency. Currently, we provide a very basic HIM- focused statistics education (for example, census rates, healthcare formulas, and so on). The intent of the term “Math Statistics” is to broaden the scope of statistics so it is not necessarily or specifically focused on healthcare. Math Statistics is housed in the Body of Knowledge because no specific competencies are required. Instead, the requirement is a broad overview of the area.

Each academic program has the discretion to facilitate enhanced statistical content as is appropriate for their institution; some may require a MATH course, and others may embed the content in a current course. The intent is to provide more content about statistical concepts and to lay a foundation for statistical analysis of healthcare data.

CODING ROLE

With a reliance on tools and systems, the Coding role is changing. Technology and ICD-11 will impact the way coding is conducted. Coding continues to be covered at the foundational level in the Associate competencies and at a deeper level in the Revenue Management pathway. The new competencies will provide programs with the flexibility to provide specific content, as appropriate to their service areas. This prepares students for the unique nature of their marketplaces. Currently, educational institutions adjust the level of coding education based on market demand and geographic location.

BLOOM'S TABLE

The revised Bloom's table included with the competencies has been created to specifically provide a common language for the AHIMA competencies. Using other Bloom's tables may confuse efforts to create activities at the appropriate level. The Bloom's Taxonomy level listed with the competency is the level of accomplishment, not the level of introduction. It is also the minimum requirement. Educators may make the decision to teach a competency at a higher level, as appropriate for the program.

Updated definitions of the Bloom's taxonomy levels have been provided with the final version of the competencies.

CURRICULAR GUIDANCE

Curricular Guidance resources have been developed for each academic level. These are currently in a draft format and must be revised with the final curriculum. The intention is to provide educators with suggested learning resources, examples, potential websites, and other ideas for educators' consideration only. In a spirit of academic freedom, it is ultimately each educator's responsibility to choose whichever learning resources they prefer to use in their courses, curriculum, and program. There is no expressed nor implied guarantee that using a listed resource meets a given HIM competency, Bloom's level or accreditation standard. The new Curricular Guidance resources replace the previous Curricular Considerations and are now maintained separately from the HIM Curricular Competencies, which provides much more flexibility with keeping the Curricular Guidance resources current. Content suggestions for a specific competency provided through the surveys will be added to the Curricular Guidance documents.



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SPECIALTY TRACKS IN THE ASSOCIATE DEGREE

Some have struggled with the idea of specialty content at the associate level. This notion is clear from the remarks received during the 2018 curriculum competencies open comment period. The concerns noted were commonly related to geographic location, making a student decide early in their educational process, and the fact that no other healthcare programs do this. In addition, many suggested that these additional specialty competencies be placed, instead, at the baccalaureate level of education. These are all valid concerns and at the same time, it is clear there is a need for change in HIM education to meet changing employer needs.

We recognize that ambiguity surrounding the future state of certification and employability concerns many. Yet we must consider the workforce needs presently shifting to require concentrated knowledge and skill sets to prepare students to meet future workforce demands. The transition to associate degree tracks allows the technical HIM professional level to be specialized, bringing awareness to employers that associate degree-educated HIM professionals have a deep knowledge in a specific area of HIM practice grounded by a solid foundation of knowledge and skills that all HIM professionals possess. The goal is to demonstrate recognition for specialty expertise that meets current industry needs, and over the long term fosters a dynamic and adaptive framework for addressing HIM challenges (AHIMA 2016). Data Management (DM) and Revenue Management (RM) were identified as specialty tracks based on a 2016 survey of healthcare employers who identified the skills anticipated to be required of HIM professionals within the next 5 to 10 years.

The addition of specialty content is related specifically to associate level education as employers are looking for individuals with a higher level of education or those that are more specifically prepared for entry level jobs. For this reason, it does not make sense to place this specialty content at the baccalaureate level where individuals already have a much broader set of entry level positions to choose from. Please review the information available at <http://bok.ahima.org/doc?oid=302487#.XDekN1xKhPZ> that is based on recent market research conducted to better understand the changing job market.

HIM Reimagined (HIMR), from its very inception, has been about advancing the HIM profession and ensuring relevance in the future. Curriculum revisions are a foundational element needed to meet the goals set forth in HIMR. The 2018 curricula competencies were developed with thoughtful consideration intended to help individuals climb the academic ladder, knowing that this too is an important part of the future. While not everyone agrees with the selected methods for achieving these goals, it is important to recognize that we are all one community with different ideas and opinions on how to proceed. The research (both market and literature based) have been studied extensively to understand where and what changes to expect in the future. We will look forward to continued conversation in the academic community around best practices in implementing these new competencies.

CERTIFICATION AND ACCREDITATION

All comments received from the surveys have been provided to CAHIIM and CCHIIM. CAHIIM has provided a response to include implementation timelines that can be found here: www.cahiim.org. CCHIIM is currently reviewing the new curricula and the feedback from the open comment period and will determine their next steps.

Please direct any curricula-related questions to christi.lower@ahima.org.