Background:

HIM Reimagined (HIMR) is AHIMA’s current academic strategy. In 2016, the AHIMA Board of Directors charged AHIMA’s Council for Excellence in Education (CEE) with creating a new academic strategy to ensure the continued success and relevance of the HIM profession in a changing future.

HIMR was introduced first from the academic standpoint because the academic world moves very slowly. In order to implement curriculum changes, it takes years to secure the necessary approvals in the schools and states. While many believe we need to move more quickly to achieve the goals of HIMR, the education community is foundational in making the changes that need to be in place in the future to meet changing employer needs. However, the HIMR message is not a singular one for HIM educators and new students. It speaks to the entirety of the HIM profession by calling out specific content areas that offer opportunity for the future. AHIMA, guided by our vision, mission, and strategy, is focused on delivering content and methods to ensure the existing workforce of HIM professionals have the new skills they need to be successful in the future.

This background informs AHIMA’s emerging workforce development strategy (presently under construction). New workforce data is being collected from multiple authoritative sources. Key findings from the original HIMR Whitepaper and Workforce Study indicate that:

- 71 to 100 percent of coding will be automated within 5 to 10 years
- Coding-related positions will require higher skill level and no longer be entry-level positions
- A bachelor’s degree will be the minimum requirement for 87 percent or more of the jobs and 46 percent at the graduate level (informatics, information technology, and analytics)

Bring these concepts together visually by viewing the HIMR infographic. This update is offered to outline the HIMR recommendations, associated strategies, actions taken to date, present status, concerns, and continued efforts to achieve the goals set forth in HIMR.

HIMR included four primary recommendations:

1. **Recommendation**: Increase the number of AHIMA members who hold relevant graduate degrees, (e.g., HIM, Health Informatics, MBA, MD, MEd, MPH) to 20 percent of total membership within 10 years

   **Strategies**: (originally under Recommendation #4):
   - Increase funding of academic scholarships to foster access to advanced degrees.
   - Ensure clear pathways exist between associate and baccalaureate HIM programs to encourage existing HIM professionals and new entrants to the HIM profession to earn a baccalaureate degree and a RHIA credential.
   - Provide support to educational institutions to transition programs, as appropriate and when possible, from associate level to baccalaureate level and from baccalaureate to master’s level. This is one of AHIMA’s CEE Graduate Resource Alliance (GRA) initiatives.

ahima.org/HIMR
2019 3RD QUARTER HIMR UPDATE
Actions/Status Updates: Since AHIMA began tracking education levels in 2012, graduate prepared members (Master’s and Doctoral Levels) have risen from 8 percent to 14 percent (as of January 30, 2019). New graduate level curriculum competencies have been developed and will be fully implemented over the next two years. RHIT to RHIA Proviso has resulted in 358 people taking the exam and passing. The Proviso is effective until December 31, 2021, and additional information can be found at www.ahima.org/certifications. AHIMA’s CEE GRA is working on several deliverables to promote matriculation of undergraduate students to graduate programs and support the development of new HIM/HI graduate programs.

Concerns: Lack of faculty qualified to teach HIM and related graduate education.

2. Recommendation: In collaboration with other health and health-related organizations, in the public and private sectors, build a mechanism to ensure availability of research that supports health informatics and information management.

Strategies:

• Provide competitive research grants on an annual basis aimed at promoting health informatics and information management practice.
• Provide dissertation scholarships to HIM and health informatics professionals conducting research in doctoral programs.
• Focus on research to support the value of HIM skills and the need for data analytics to manage data for strategic, fiscal, and population health purposes.

Actions/Status Updates: Tactics to achieve this recommendation will be planned for 2020 and beyond and in collaboration with the AHIMA Foundation, as appropriate. AHIMA’s CEE GRA has collaborated with the AHIMA Foundation Research Network (AFRN) to conduct training for research and scholarly activities. The CEE GRA is also developing a toolkit to assist members in getting started with scholarly publications and research.

3. Recommendation: 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.

Strategies:

• Ongoing exploration of workforce needs to support additional specialization across all academic levels.

Actions/Status Updates: New curriculum competencies have been approved and released for implementation by 2021. Focused specialty content is required for associate programs. At the associate level there are two new specialty tracks in revenue management and data management in which programs must choose one or both. Strengthened HIM foundation at the baccalaureate level. Condensed foundations at Master’s Health Information Management with specialization opportunities at program level.
4. **Recommendation:** RHIA credential is recognized as the standard for HIM generalist practice and the RHIT (+Specialty) as the technical level of practice.

**Actions/Status Updates:** This recommendation was made in awareness that any decision related to changing the existing RHIT certification would require approval of the Commission on Certification for Health Informatics and Information Management (CCHIIM). At this time, CCHIIM has elected not to move forward with the HIMR recommendation for the RHIT+ Specialty certification. CCHIIM understands there is more than one way to designate specialty knowledge. For example, through micro-credentialing or certificates instead of certifications. For this reason, and as a result of the concerns voiced by AHIMA members about a potential change to the existing RHIT certification, CCHIIM reached the conclusion to not move in the direction of the RHIT+ Specialty certification.

Two additional perspectives are important to keep in mind here:

1. Academic Curricula is forward-facing, future-focused and prepares people for their future career, beyond entry level;

2. Certification is backward-facing, with certification exam content validated by a job analysis that looks at the entry level skills needed over the past 5 to 10 years to the present.

AHIMA is committed to the continued relevancy of the Association and the HIM profession. Initiatives such as HIMR, the efforts of AHIMA’s CEE workgroups and AHIMA’s thought leadership and workforce development strategies, among others are evidence of the ways that AHIMA is purposefully and actively building a framework to transform HIM, position professionals for the future, and identify pathways for practitioners to develop skills needed to secure future HIM jobs. As each one of us considers the future, AHIMA is with you in support and advocacy every step of the way.

**HIMR Resources:**

- HIMR Website (multiple resources and updates)
- HIM Reimagined White Paper
- View the HIMR infographic
- 2014 AHIMA Workforce Study
- Journal of AHIMA (multiple articles on HIMR and Workforce)

**References**