

## **Ethics Self-Assessment**

### **How to use the Self-Assessment**

Members and credentialed nonmembers of the American Health Information Management Association agree, as a condition of membership and certification, to abide by AHIMA's Code of Ethics. This self-assessment is developed to help you identify your areas of strength in ethics and areas you might wish to strengthen.

This tool is intended for personal use only. We hope that you find this self-assessment useful as well as stimulating for you in the area of ethics, and we thank you for taking time to complete it.

### **After completing the Self-Assessment**

Once you have completed the self-assessment, please review your responses, noting which statements you answered "**Occasionally**" or "**Almost Never.**" In some situations, these answers are suitable, however, in other situations, an answer of "occasionally" may raise an ethical red flag. This instrument does not have a scoring mechanism which was purposely done as this is your personal ethics self-assessment, designed for your own use only. We are confident that you may uncover a few red flags and that if you do, you will willingly and appropriately address them. We encourage you to use AHIMA's ethics resources to help strengthen areas of your practice.

***Please check one answer for each of the following questions.***

Each statement has 5 options attached: Always, Usually, Occasionally, Almost Never, Not applicable. Please check the one that most accurately represents you.

***The Guideline number that is listed next to each phrase on the self-assessment corresponds with the specific Guidelines that are included on the [AHIMA Code of Ethics](#). For example, 1.1 refers to the following Guideline:***

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

## I. Privacy/Confidentiality

|   | Always | Usually | Occasionally | Almost Never | Not Applicable |
|---|--------|---------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. I protect all confidential consumer information to include, but not limited to, personal, health, financial, genetic, and outcome information, regardless of the medium in which the information is stored. ( <i>Guideline 1.1</i> )   |        |         |              |              |                |
| 2. I protect the confidential or proprietary information obtained in the course of professional service. ( <i>Guidelines 1.4 and 3.1</i> )  |        |         |              |              |                |
| 3. I disclose only information that is according to federal or state regulations, and that is directly relevant or minimally necessary to achieve the purpose of disclosure. ( <i>Guideline 1.4</i> )   |        |         |              |              |                |
| 4. I promote the obligation to respect privacy in the following ways: 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. ( <i>Guideline 1.5</i> ) |        |         |              |              |                |
| 5. I take precautions to ensure and maintain the privacy and security of information transmitted, transferred, or disposed of, including that in the event of a termination, incapacitation, or death of a healthcare provider or the termination of a practice. ( <i>Guideline 3.2</i> )   |        |         |              |              |                |
| 6. I inform recipients of the limitations and risks associated with providing services via electronic or social media (such as computer, smartphones, cell/telephone, fax, radio, video, etc.). ( <i>Guideline 3.3</i> )  |        |         |              |              |                |

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| 7. I engage in evaluation or research that ensures the anonymity or confidentiality of participants and of the data obtained from them by following guidelines developed for the participants in consultation with appropriate institutional review boards. ( <i>Guideline 9.4</i> ) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. I respond promptly and appropriately to consumer requests in regards to their privacy rights (e.g., access, amendments, restriction, confidential communication, etc.). ( <i>Guideline 1.6</i> )  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9. I verify requests for data and information based on appropriate, verifiable needs and conditions that fall within the confines of organizational policies, regulations, and laws. ( <i>Guideline 6.1</i> )  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10. I educate stakeholders about the need to maintain data integrity and the potential impacts should data integrity not be maintained. ( <i>Guideline 6.2</i> )   |  |  |  |  |  |

## II. External Relationships

|  | Always | Usually | Occasionally | Almost Never | Not Applicable |
|--|--------|---------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. I anticipate, clarify, and avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest, to all parties concerned, when dealing with vendors and consumers; consulting with competitors and clients; or in providing services requiring potentially conflicting roles. ( <i>Guidelines 2.3 and 10.4</i> ) |        |         |              |              |                |
| 2. I do not permit my private conduct to interfere with my ability to fulfill my professional responsibilities. ( <i>Guideline 2.6</i> )   |        |         |              |              |                |
| 3. I do not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further my personal, religious, political, or business interests. ( <i>Guideline 2.7</i> )   |        |         |              |              |                |

**III. Adherence to AHIMA Code of Ethics/Professionalism**

|  | Always | Usually | Occasionally | Almost Never | Not Applicable |
|--|--------|---------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. I act with integrity, behave in a trustworthy manner, elevate service to others above self-interest, and promote high standards of HIM practice in every setting. <i>(Guidelines 1.2 and 2.1)</i> |        |         |              |              |                |
| 2. I am aware of the profession's mission, values, and ethical principles, and practice in a manner that is professional and ethical. <i>(Guideline 2.2)</i>   |        |         |              |              |                |
| 3. I am honest, treat others with respect, and am accountable for my actions. <i>(Guideline 2.1)</i>   |        |         |              |              |                |

**IV. Work Environment**

|   | Always | Usually | Occasionally | Almost Never | Not Applicable |
|---|--------|---------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. I ensure that the working environment is consistent and encourages compliance with the AHIMA Code of Ethics, taking reasonable steps to eliminate any conditions in my organization that violate, interfere with, or discourage compliance with the code. <i>(Guideline 2.4)</i> |        |         |              |              |                |
| 2. I 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. <i>(Guideline 9.7)</i>  |        |         |              |              |                |
| 3. I am willing to take action to address organizational practices which are not consistent with the AHIMA Code of Ethics, accreditation/licensing standards, and/or federal or state regulations. <i>(Guideline 2.4)</i>   |        |         |              |              |                |

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| 4. I use healthcare employer technology resources within the confines of organizational policies. ( <i>Guideline 5.1</i> )  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. I ensure all data and resulting information accessed and derived from healthcare technology resources are not used outside of the scope of the job. ( <i>Guideline 5.2</i> ) |  |  |  |  |  |

### V. Interpersonal Relationships

|   | Always | Usually | Occasionally | Almost Never | Not Applicable |
|---|--------|---------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. I am willing to take adequate steps to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the professional behavior and unethical conduct of co-workers and colleagues. ( <i>Guideline 4.2</i> )   |        |         |              |              |                |
| 2. I am 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. ( <i>Guideline 4.3</i> ) |        |         |              |              |                |
| 3. I 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 my concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such discussion is likely to be productive. ( <i>Guideline 4.4</i> )                                       |        |         |              |              |                |
| 4. I 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. ( <i>Guideline 4.5</i> )   |        |         |              |              |                |
| 5. I ensure all voices are listened to and respected, and I Value all kinds and classes of people equitably, deal effectively with all races, cultures, disabilities, ages and genders. ( <i>Guidelines 13.3 and 13.4</i> )   |        |         |              |              |                |

## VI. Self-Reflection

|  | Always | Usually | Occasionally | Almost Never | Not Applicable |
|--|--------|---------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. I take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work I actually perform or to which I contribute. ( <i>Guideline 2.5</i> )  |        |         |              |              |                |
| 2. I continually develop and enhance my professional expertise, knowledge, and skills (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision). ( <i>Guideline 9.1</i> )                           |        |         |              |              |                |
| 3. I participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the well-being of consumers by drawing on the perspectives, values, and experiences of those involved in decisions related to consumers. ( <i>Guideline 12.1</i> ) |        |         |              |              |                |
| 4. I treat each person in a respectful fashion, being mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. ( <i>Guideline 13.1</i> )   |        |         |              |              |                |
| 5. I promote the value of self-determination for each individual. ( <i>Guideline 13.2</i> )  |        |         |              |              |                |
| 6. I foster trust among group members and adjust behavior in order to establish relationships with teams. ( <i>Guideline 12.3</i> )  |        |         |              |              |                |

## VII. Compliance

|  | Always | Usually | Occasionally | Almost Never | Not Applicable |
|--|--------|---------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. I advocate for changes in policy and legislation to ensure protection of consumer privacy and security, coding compliance, and other issues that surface as advocacy issues, as well as facilitate informed participation by the public on these issues. ( <i>Guideline 1.3</i> ) |        |         |              |              |                |

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| 2. I base practice decisions on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge, relevant to health information management and health information management ethics. <i>(Guideline 9.2)</i>  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. I do not participate in, condone, or associate with fraud or abuse. <i>(Guideline 4.8)</i>  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. I speak on behalf of AHIMA and AHIMA sponsored organizations, accurately representing the official and authorized positions of the organizations. <i>(Guideline 10.3)</i>   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. I 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 organization, or the health information management professional's employer. <i>(Guideline 11.1)</i> |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. I do not manipulate information systems to produce or display data and resulting information that is intentionally misleading. <i>(Guideline 6.3)</i>   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. I do not compromise the integrity of healthcare data through any intentional acts or acts that are generally known to create risks to data integrity. <i>(Guideline 5.3)</i>  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. I shall not engage in any relationships with a person (consumer, staff, peers or colleagues) where there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the consumer. <i>(Guidelines 4.9; 7.3 and 7.7)</i>  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9. I conduct evaluation and research in conformance with applicable laws. I report findings accurately, and if errors are discovered, I take steps to correct these errors using standard publication methods. <i>(Guidelines 9.5 and 9.6)</i>   |  |  |  |  |  |

**VIII. Sustaining the Profession Through the Support of Educational Opportunities**

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|--|--------|---------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
|  | Always | Usually | Occasionally | Almost Never | Not Applicable |
|--|--------|---------|--------------|--------------|----------------|

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| 1. I am a mentor for students, peers and new health information management professionals to develop and strengthen skills. (Guideline 7.2)   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. I provide directed practice opportunities for students. (Guideline 7.1)   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. I am responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries for students. (Guideline 7.3)  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. I assign students only to official duties and do not ask them to assist me with work on behalf of my family, friends or associates. (Guideline 7.3)                                       |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. I do not engage in any relationship with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student. (Guideline 7.3)  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. I evaluate students' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful when functioning as an educator or clinical internship supervisor. (Guideline 7.4)                               |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. I 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. (Guideline 8.1) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. I will serve an active role in developing HIM faculty or actively recruiting HIM professionals. (Guideline 7.6)   |  |  |  |  |  |

**IX. AHIMA Membership Responsibilities**

|   | Always | Usually | Occasionally | Almost Never | Not Applicable |
|---|--------|---------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. I perform responsibly all duties as assigned by the professional association. (Guideline 10.1)                     |        |         |              |              |                |
| 2. I will resign from a position if unable to perform the assigned responsibilities with competence. (Guideline 10.6) |        |         |              |              |                |

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| <p>3. I claim only those relevant professional credentials actually possessed and correct any inaccuracies occurring regarding credentials. <i>(Guideline 11.3)</i></p>  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <p>4. I submit complete and accurate information to maintain my continuing education requirements. <i>(Guideline 11.4)</i></p>   |  |  |  |  |  |
| <p>5. I claim and ensure that my representation to consumers, agencies, employers, and the public of professional qualifications, credentials, education, competence, affiliations, services provided, training, certification, and other relevant professional experience are accurate. <i>(Guideline 11.2)</i></p> |  |  |  |  |  |
| <p>6. I will contact an accreditation or regulatory body and/or the AHIMA Professional Ethics Committee, as appropriate. <i>(Guideline 4.6)</i></p>  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <p>7. I contribute time and professional expertise to activities that promote respect for the value, integrity, and competence of the health information management profession. <i>(Guideline 9.3)</i></p>   |  |  |  |  |  |
| <p>8. I relinquish association information upon ending appointed or elected responsibilities. <i>(Guideline 10.5)</i></p>  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <p>9. As an AHIMA member, I engage in social and political action that supports the protection of privacy and confidentiality and am aware of the impact of the political arena on the health information issues for the healthcare industry and the public. <i>(Guideline 1.2)</i></p>                              |  |  |  |  |  |
| <p>10. I uphold the decisions made by the association. <i>(Guideline 10.2)</i></p>   |  |  |  |  |  |
| <p>11. I 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, and I avoid endorsing products or services</p>  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| of a third party, for-profit entity that competes with AHIMA products and services. (Guideline 10.7) |  |  |  |  |  |
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**X. Management/Leadership**

|  | Always | Usually | Occasionally | Almost Never | Not Applicable |
|--|--------|---------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. I will use employer technology, data, and information resources within the confines of organizational policies. (Guideline 5.1)                                 |        |         |              |              |                |
| 2. I initiate and encourage discussion of the ethical aspects of management/financial/HIM issues. (Guideline 4.4)  |        |         |              |              |                |
| 3. I am successful in finding an effective resolution process and ensuring it is followed when an ethical dilemma confronts me or my organization. (Guideline 4.4) |        |         |              |              |                |
| 4. I promote professional development for staff, for their benefit and the benefit of the organization. (Guideline 9.7)  |        |         |              |              |                |
| 5. I assign staff only to official duties and do not ask them to assist me with work on behalf of my family, friends or associates. (Guideline 9.7)                |        |         |              |              |                |
| 6. If I am in a supervisory role, I evaluate staff's performance in a manner that is fair and respectful. (Guideline 7.5)  |        |         |              |              |                |
| 7. I establish clearly professional and ethical obligations of the interdisciplinary team as a whole and of its individual members. (Guideline 12.2)               |        |         |              |              |                |