



Professional Practice Experience (PPE) Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the Professional Practice Experience?

A: The Professional Practice Experience (PPE) is college-based credit for students to complete in order to graduate. The purpose of the PPE is for students to gain hands-on experience and blend theory with practice.

Q: Who can become a PPE Site Manager?

A: Any employee in good standing who believes in the AHIMA mission, vision, and value statements can provide a meaningful PPE for HIM students. AHIMA-credentialed or non-credentialed professionals are welcome to sign up to become a PPE site manager. To learn more about becoming a PPE Site Manager, please visit the [PPE Guide](#).

Q: What is the time commitment for being a PPE Site Manager?

The time commitment varies based on the student's PPE requirement. A student can complete a PPE requirement part-time or full-time, with the exact time varying from project to project.

Q: What happens when I sign up to become a PPE Site Manager? What are the next steps?

A: Your name and contact information appear on a confidential listing that is shared with the educator community, primarily CAHIIM-accredited health information management (HIM) programs, for 12 months. Interested faculty will contact you, however if you do not hear from an academic program and would like to become a PPE Site Manager, visit the [CAHIIM Program Directory](#) and contact a program director to discuss opportunities.

Q: How is my contact information shared with CAHIIM-accredited programs?

A: Before you sign up, you must log in using your AHIMA ID and password which is linked to your AHIMA profile. A report is generated with the information you provide in your AHIMA profile and shared with CAHIIM-accredited programs. Therefore, it is pivotal that AHIMA holds the most current and accurate contact information. [Update your AHIMA profile](#).

Q: What if I signed up and have since learned that I am no longer able to become a PPE Site Manager?

A: In the event you are contacted to become a PPE site manager, simply inform the program director that you are unable to supervise a student for their professional practice experience at this time.

Q: Do AHIMA-credentialed professionals receive continuing education units (CEUs) for being a PPE Site Manager?

A: Yes, you must work closely with the student through the completion of their PPE. Signing up to become a PPE Site Manager does not make you eligible to receive CEUs until you conduct substantive oversight and involvement with the student through the completion of the PPE. AHIMA-credentialed professionals can supervise more than one student and are eligible for one CEU for every 60 minutes of direct contact with a maximum of five CEUs (five hours of contact) per student, and a maximum of 10 CEUs allowed in each recertification cycle.

Q: How do I claim my CEUs?

A: The student's daily log should serve as proof of time the student spent with AHIMA-credentialed members. At the end of the PPE, the HIM Program should send a copy of the student's daily log in addition to CEU forms to the PPE site manager for internal distribution. In some cases, the school may require the PPE site manager to complete and return the student's evaluation form prior to receiving the CEU forms. Schools have a choice as to how they identify AHIMA-credentialed members for CEUs. The school may either send one CEU form noting all credentialed members involved in the student's PPE, or they may issue individual CEU forms. After you receive the necessary forms, you must officially report your CEUs accordingly through AHIMA.

Q: Can students complete a PPE at a non-traditional setting?

A: Of course! Today, many HIM programs are reaching out to encourage student placement in all organizations where health information is managed, examined, or utilized. About half of all graduating students accept positions outside of the traditional healthcare organization placement. The PPEs should reflect these new and exciting opportunities. Examples of non-traditional settings are, but not limited to, consulting companies, healthcare software companies, insurance companies, pharmaceutical firms, government agencies, and HIM service providers.

Q: I really want to be a PPE Site Manager. I have a lot of knowledge to pass on, but I work from home. Can I help?

A: Yes, there is also a need for virtual PPEs. Students are assigned to PPE site managers that create projects for them which enable students to work remotely. The work occurs through email and phone calls. The student, site manager, and program director need to agree to the nature of the project, the due date, and how the student will stay in touch with their supervisor.

Q: Is there a Department of Labor regulation that would exclude us from participating as a PPE site?

A: All HIM PPE activities are managed through college programs with the student receiving a grade for the PPE, set expectations for the student to start and complete the PPE, and a clinical preceptor overseeing each PPE student's experience in the field. For more information, visit the [Unpaid Intern Fact Sheet](#).

Q: Should site hosts be concerned about the potential ramifications of accepting PPE students who are not paid?

A: The [Six Factor Test](#) is provided for your reference and understanding of this issue. Those organizations that are concerned about this issue have likely been advised by their attorney to consider the potential ramifications. It is very clear that even if there is concern, that there are ways organizations can structure their PPE offerings to ensure paying students is not necessary. The PPE concept is critically important to the development of the HIM workforce and all efforts must be made to support the students who will represent the HIM profession of the future.