



Dear Prospective Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in the Health Information Management/Technology (HIMT) Program. Enclosed you will find a Fast Facts about the Health Information Management Technology Associate of Applied Science Degree Program. The Fast Facts answers the most frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the Health Information Management and Health Informatics Technology profession and program.

After reading this document you should meet with an academic counsellor to plan your prerequisite course schedule.

When you are enrolled in the final prerequisite course(s), you may complete your electronic online application for admission to the Health Information Management Technology Degree Program. Applications which are submitted prior to enrollment in the final required prerequisite admission course will not be considered, so be sure you are enrolled in the final HIMT program required prerequisite course.

If you have any questions or are unsure how to complete the online application, please contact the HEALTH CAREER ENROLLMENT CENTER at 216-987-4247 or a Tri-C academic counselor at 216-987-4900.

Again, thank you for your interest in Cuyahoga Community College and the Health Information Management/Technology Program.

Kathy Loflin, R.H.I.A.

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Program Manager - Health Information Management/Technology



FAST FACTS
HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY (HIMT)
Associate of Applied Science Degree Program

Are you searching for the formula to success? Then consider combining these ingredients for a career with tremendous potential—healthcare and information technology.

The health information management technology (HIMT) field places you right where the expanding arena of healthcare meets the cutting edge of technology. As an HIMT professional, you are the expert on patient data that doctors, nurses, and other providers rely on to perform their jobs. By maintaining, collecting, and analyzing health information, your work makes an important contribution to the delivery of quality care. You should aware that Health Information Management Technology (HIMT) and Health Information Management (HIM) are used interchangeably in health settings.

Health information management technology professionals have skills and competencies in health data management, information policy, information systems, and administrative and clinical work flow. HIMT is focused on operations management – essential to ensuring an accurate and complete medical record and cost-effective information processing.

In acute care hospitals, Health Information Management Technology is often part of the team including the Information Technology (IT) staff and clinical informatics professionals that oversee electronic health records (EHRs).

HIMT skills are critical to continuous quality improvement, regulatory requirements, project management and leadership, revenue cycle processes, ensuring the availability of accurate health data, and medical coding and billing. The role of HIMT in helping medical practices adopt electronic health records is growing and is an ideal skill set for EHR technical assistance.

HIMT is a value-added “bridge” between clinicians, payors, regulators, patients, consumers and technology (EHRs, personal health records), with critical skills and competencies essential to building the nationwide health information network (NHIN) and health information exchanges (HIEs).

1. What is a Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT) and what type of work does an RHIT perform?

RHITs hold many diverse roles, yet all share a common purpose: providing reliable and valid information that drives the healthcare industry. They are specialists in administering information systems, managing medical records, and coding information for reimbursement and research. Health information management technology professionals are uniquely qualified to:

- ❖ Ensure health information is complete and available to legitimate users
- ❖ Code and classify data for reimbursement
- ❖ Analyze information necessary for decision support
- ❖ Protect patient privacy and provide information security
- ❖ Enhance the quality and uses for data within healthcare
- ❖ Administer health information computer systems
- ❖ Comply with standards and regulations regarding health information
- ❖ Prepare health data for accreditation surveys
- ❖ Analyze clinical data for research and public policy

Some positions available to a RHIT are as a:

- ❖ Clinical Coding Specialist
- ❖ Health Data Analyst
- ❖ Insurance Claims Analyst
- ❖ Records Technician Specialist (paper-based and electronic health records)
- ❖ Physician Practice Manager
- ❖ Patient Information Coordinator
- ❖ Information Systems Analyst
- ❖ Electronic Health Record (EHR) Implementation manager support specialist, and/or trainer
- ❖ Workflow and Health Information Redesign Specialist
- ❖ Health Information Management department supervisor

Characteristics of a Health Information Management Technology professional:

- ❖ Have average to above intelligence coupled with common sense.
- ❖ Are capable of independent thought and assumes responsibility
- ❖ Are interested in computer science and information technology.
- ❖ Have an excellent communication talent
- ❖ Realize that change and uncertainty is the norm.
- ❖ Have the flexibility, diversity, and ability to learn new skills quickly.

- ❖ Have a questioning attitude and tolerance for ambiguity.
- ❖ Are tactful, diplomatic and discreet.
- ❖ Have critical-thinking, problem-solving and decision-making capabilities.
- ❖ Demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills and a positive, cooperative attitude.
- ❖ Are organized and detail-oriented.

2. How do I become an RHIT?

The first step begins with formal education. You need to complete an associate degree program in Health Information Management Technology offered at numerous CAHIIM accredited institutions across the country. CAHIIM is the acronym for the **C**ommission on **A**ccreditation of **H**ealth **I**nformatics and **I**nformation **M**anagement Education. The HIMT program at Cuyahoga Community College is CAHIIM accredited.

If you're a high school student considering an HIMT career, the following high school courses provide a good foundation: business, computer science, English, math, biology, and chemistry.

If you've already earned a college degree and possess the prerequisites, you can earn a postgraduate certificate or second degree in Health Information Management.

When you have finished your HIMT education and training, the next step is to successfully complete a credentialing examination. Upon passing the exam, you are permitted to use the credential RHIT behind your last name to designate your professional level. Earning a credential validates your competence as an HIMT professional to employers and the public.

3. Where does an RHIT find employment?

RHITs enjoy a broad selection of job opportunities and options for professional growth. The types of employment opportunities are endless, limited only by the RHIT's imagination drive and willingness to take risks. Over 70% of RHITs work in health information management technology/services (also known as medical record) departments in hospitals. However, with the expanding uses of health care information, more RHITs are finding opportunities for employment in the following areas:

Physician offices/practices, Health Information Exchange (HIE) offices, Regional Extension Centers (RECs), regional and state registries (tumor), ambulatory care clinics, outpatient surgery centers, long term care facilities, mental health facilities, psychiatric hospitals, industrial clinics, accounting firms, law offices, medical equipment sales, home health care, health maintenance organizations, education, state and federal health agencies, private industry, centers of research, hospice center, college/university health centers, insurance companies, and medical or health record software firms.

4. What type of salary can an RHIT expect to receive?

On top of strong job prospects, competitive salaries also await HIMT graduates. More than half of new HIMT graduates with an associate's degree jump right in and earn \$43,000 to \$52,000 annually. And these figures are just averages—many HIMT professionals report salaries upward from here. You can visit the American Health Information Management Association's Web site at www.AHIMA.org to see the results of AHIMA's latest member salary and profile survey.

5. How is the job market outlook?

Good! The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics cites health information technology as one of the fastest growing occupations in the US. All Cuyahoga Community College graduates who have wanted to be employed as RHITs have been offered a job and most begin work immediately after graduation. It is important to note that most of Cuyahoga Community College's HIMT graduates desire employment in the Cleveland area, therefore, this job market is more competitive. If you are able to relocate to an area where there is a greater shortage of RHITs, then your employment opportunities and earnings are more widely expanded.

6. How long is the program?

Fulltime students will take two (2) years. Five consecutive semesters.

Part-time students will take 4-5 years depending on how many general education classes the student takes per semester. **Part time students are required to take all science and general education courses prior to beginning the HIMT program sequence.** Once a part time student begins the HIMT course sequence, the courses are taken two per semester for 6 to 9 semesters depending on the student ability.

A clinical or professional practice experience (PPE) is done the final spring semester **during daytime hours only**. Therefore, evening students will need to plan ahead to be able to accommodate the daytime rotation requirement of the PPE.

7. Briefly describe the Health Information Management Technology Program.

The Health Information Management Technology Program is accredited by the **Commission on Accreditation of Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIM)** in collaboration with the American Health Information Management Association. The goal of the Health Information Management/Technology Program is to provide an educational experience within the framework of professional standards. Student accomplishments are reflected by their efforts in assuming responsibility for learning. The curriculum is structured around specific course objectives and is scheduled to balance student needs, instructor time, and the availability of desired experiences. The staff is dedicated to the maintenance of highest possible standards of professional excellence as well as personal growth and the development of an open and honest learning relationship with the students.

8. Can I transfer credits from another college or university?

Generally, yes. Students are encouraged to see a Cuyahoga Community College academic counselor after their transcripts have been forwarded to Tri-C. All Tri-C counselors can give you specific information about course substitution, course transfers, etc

9. Can I complete the program on a part-time basis? Will I be able to work while attending the program? Is the program offered in the evenings or weekends?

Students who can only attend college on a part-time basis are accepted into the program, but it must be understood that it will take more than two years to complete the program. Before a part-time student is eligible to take a certain course, he/she must meet all the prerequisites. It is required that a part-time student complete all of the degree-required courses in the HIMT curriculum (all the non-HIM courses) before entering the program. This will increase successful program completion and satisfaction. The HIM-numbered courses for part time students attending college in the evenings and on the weekends begins every fall semester at the Metro Campus and every-other spring semester at the Eastern Campus. These courses should be taken two at a time during the last two years. The practicum experience **is not** available during the evenings or weekends and the students will need to make special arrangements in their work schedules to accommodate this part of the curriculum.

Students in the program have found having a part-time and/or full-time job manageable. This is something you will want to discuss with the HIMT Program Manager. Most students who need to work do so on a part-time basis and complete the HIMT program in 3-5 years. You also should consider working on second or third shift when it is time for your practicum experience and your employer needs to understand that your schedule may vary each semester and the need to be flexible is a must.

All HIM courses are offered at the Metropolitan campus with some exceptions. The majority of other required courses are offered during weekdays, weekends or in the evenings at all three campuses and a student may take these courses at the campus of his/her choice.

10. Is financial aid available?

Financial assistance is available through the College in the form of scholarships, grants, or loans. The College suggests that all forms for financial aid application be submitted at least six weeks prior to registration. Application forms are available in the Financial Aid Office at each campus. Questions regarding financial aid should be directed to the financial aid office at Eastern campus 987-2211, Metro campus 987-4100 or Western campus 987-5100.

11. Where can I obtain additional information regarding the profession?

You may obtain additional information from the College catalog.

Check the campus resource center or your neighborhood library for professional journals, directories and trade publications in the specific field you are exploring.

Talk to people who work in the HIMT Field. (Do they enjoy their jobs? If given a chance would they do it over again?) Call companies that employ people in the field you are researching. Let them know you are only seeking information and advice. Develop and take along a list of questions. After each interview, ask if there is anyone else that can help you.

Interesting Web sites that might help you with your decision:

❖ American Health Information Management Association <http://www.ahima.org>

- ❖ Health Information Careers website <https://www.ahima.org/career-mapping/career-map/>
- ❖ Cuyahoga Community College website at www.tri-c.edu and typing Health Information Management in the search box, or typing this link into your browser:
<http://www.tri-c.edu/programs/healthcareers/healthinformation/Pages/default.aspx>

12. How do I apply or begin taking courses in the Health Information Management Technology Program?

Make an appointment with a Tri-C academic counselor. The counselor will discuss your career goals with you and then help you plan a program of related courses that will guide you toward your career in Health Information Management Technology. A Tri-C counselor can give specific information about required pre-admission courses, course substitution, course transfers, etc.

When you are enrolled in the final pre-admission course(s), you may complete either the paper or electronic online application for admission to the Health Information Management Technology Degree Program. Applications which are submitted prior to enrollment in the final required prerequisite admission course or courses will not be considered, so be sure you are enrolled in the final HIMT program required prerequisite course.

The Health Information Management Technology Program uses a “rolling admission” process for admittance into the program. After a student has met all the admission requirements and submitted his/her online application, a letter of acceptance will be emailed to the student informing the student of the next available opening. A new class of HIMT students begins every fall semester. If the application is incomplete it will not be considered. Students must achieve or complete the following before applying to the program:

- a) Submission of a completed Cuyahoga Community College Admissions Application
- b) Submission of a completed Health Careers Program Application (online)
- c) Submission of official high school transcript or GED certificate. (Request the high school or GED office to forward the transcript to the Office of Admissions and Records)
- d) Submission of transcripts from all colleges or universities attended. Your application will not be considered complete until all external transcripts have been evaluated by the Tri-C Admission and Records Department which takes 4-6 weeks
- e) Submissions of any Substitution and Waiver forms for courses approved by HIMT program manager; or submit a note stating that a Substitution/Waiver has been requested and is pending.
- f) Candidates must complete the following prerequisite courses (or transfer of comparable courses from another college or university):
 - **BIO 2331, Anatomy and Physiology I** (must be a grade B or higher)
 - Any Anatomy and Physiology courses must have been completed not more than 5 years ago and a letter grade of B or higher is required
 - **ENG 1010, College Composition I**
 - **IT 1090, Computers Applications**
 - **MA-1010, Introduction to Medical Terminology**
 - Credit-By-Exam (CBE) will be accepted in place of a letter grade, but will be interpreted as a 2.0 GPA. Program manager will evaluate CBE on an individual basis.
- g) HIMT degree students will be required to submit evidence of good health and complete a criminal background check the fall semester prior to clinical practice.

- h) **Non-native English-speaking applicants** must demonstrate competence in verbal, written and oral communications skills. Non-native English-Speaking applicants must complete English Second Language (ESL) course work with a minimum grade of B or higher.
1. Students experiencing English communication and/or comprehension problems will not be permitted to start their clinical practice experience.
- i) All information should be sent to:
- The Health Careers Enrollment Center
Cuyahoga Community College
2900 Community College Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
Attn: HIMT Program

When these requirements are met and verified, the student will be notified of acceptance into the HIMT Program by the program director. An email will be sent to the student informing him/her of his/her status and a reply form will need to be completed by the student and returned to the program director to accept the program position.

13. Is there a Bachelor Degree available for the Health Information Management Field and can I transfer my credits from this program to the four-year institution?

Students who have an Associate Degree in Applied Science with a major in Health Information Management Technology from Cuyahoga Community College can transfer to any HIM bachelor-degree program within the United States.

In Ohio:

The Ohio State University in Columbus has a 4-year traditional degree program that accepts our graduates as third-year students. These courses are only offered "on campus" in Columbus.

The University of Toledo accepts Tri-C HIMT graduates into their HIA bachelor-degree program as second-year students who *will need to complete five bridge courses* before being considered a full junior. This program is online for distance learners or classes can be taken on campus.

The University of Cincinnati and **DeVry University** accept Tri-C HIMT graduates into their HIM Bachelor Degree programs as full juniors *without* the need for additional bridge courses. Students are required to take and pass the RHIT examination within six months of graduating from Tri-C in order to stay in these universities.

Most other HIM bachelor degree programs outside of Ohio do require "bridge courses" to bring the student up to the level of a full junior in a 4-year institution. Usually there are not more than five bridge courses required. The student will need to discuss the bridge course requirements with the HIM program managers at the 4-year College or University.

14. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

Many healthcare facilities have begun to require criminal background checks for their employees. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations Hospital Accreditation Standards Manual requires hospitals to implement "a process to ensure that a person's qualifications are consistent with his/her job responsibilities." This standard "applies to staff, students and volunteers," and it further states that the hospital is responsible for verifying "the following according to law, regulation or hospital policy: information on criminal background." As such, Cuyahoga Community College students who participate in professional practice experiences in the health information Management Technology program may be required to undergo a criminal background check prior to placement at the facility. In addition, the facility may require students to undergo a physical examination (on-site at the facility or by the student's primary care provider) prior to beginning the professional practice experience that may include drug screening. Students will be required to incur costs associated with the criminal background check and/or the drug screening.

15. DRUG TESTING

Students may be required to undergo drug testing prior to starting a clinical experience. The student is responsible for the cost of this testing. The type of testing needed, time restrictions and the cost of the testing will be dependent on the clinical site. Test results will be sent to Clinical Site Coordinator, Healthcare Career Initiatives at Cuyahoga Community College and they will be kept confidential.

If a student fails a drug test, Cuyahoga Community College is under no obligation to place a student at another clinical site. It is the student's responsibility to provide proper documentation to the Clinical Site Coordinator, Healthcare Career Initiatives if they failed the test due to justifiable drug use.

A student may not be able to complete the health career program if they cannot be placed in a clinical site due a failed drug test.

16. **PASS/NO PASS GRADE OPTION**

Students can elect up to 12 credits taken Pass/No Pass (P/NP) to fulfill degree requirements at Tri-C. **However, courses used as pre-requisites or core courses for the Health Information Management Technology Program(s) must have a traditional letter grade.** This means that all courses within the HIMT degree sequence must have a letter grade including the general education courses required for graduation.

Health Information Management Technology Associate in Applied Science – effective Fall 2024

Traditional Day schedule PLAN

*Prerequisite Courses for Acceptance into the HIMT Degree Program			Credits	Grade Earned	NOTES
BIO*	2331	Anatomy & Physiology I	4		
ENG*	1010	College Composition I	3		
IT*	1090	Computer Applications	3		
MA*	1010	Intro to Medical Terminology	2		
			12 = total		
<i>Eligibility for MATH 1410 Elementary & Probability Statistics I</i>					

2024	FALL Semester (Starting HIM Catalog Year)			Credits	Grade	
	BIO	2341	Anatomy & Physiology II	4		
	HIM	1301	Intro to Health Information Management	3		
	HIM	1311	Legal Aspects of HIM	3		
	HIM	1401	Systems in Healthcare Delivery	2		
	HTEC	1610	Intro to Pharmacology	2		
			14 = total			

2025	SPRING Semester			Credits	Grade	
	BIO	2600	Pathophysiology	3		
	HIM	1424	Health Informatics and Information Management	3		
	HIM	1432	Computer Systems in HIM	3		
	HIM	2160	Coding with ICD-10-CM	3		
	MATH	1410	Elementary & Probability Statistics 1	3		
				15 = total		
	SUMMER Semester			Credits	Grade	
	HIM	2130	Coding with CPT	3		
	HIM	2410	Management Practices in HIM	2		
			5 = total			
FALL Semester			Credits	Grade		
PSY	1010	General Psychology	3			
HIM	2201	Project Management for the HIM Professional	3			
HIM	2260	Coding with ICD-10-PCS	3			
HIM	2320	Quality Improvement & Statistics in Healthcare	3			
			12 = total			

2025	SPRING Semester: GRADUATION			Credits	Grade	Notes
	HIM	2401	Intermediate Coding with ICD-10 and CPT	2		
	HIM	2430	Medical Reimbursement Methodologies	2		
	HIM	2910	Professional Practice Experiential Learning	1		
	HIM	2990	HIM Capstone ©	2		
			7 = total			

Total semester credits 65 (effective for students applying for Fall Semester 2024 HIMT admissions)

Course Sequence and Numbers/Titles are subject to Change

Health Information Management Technology Associate in Applied Science

PART TIME EVENING STUDENT Program Sequence PLAN FALL 2024

*Prerequisite Courses for Acceptance into the HIMT Degree Program			Credits	Grade	NOTES
BIO*	2331	Anatomy & Physiology I	4		
BIO	2341	Anatomy & Physiology II	4		
BIO	2600	Pathophysiology	3		
ENG*	1010	College Composition I	3		
HTEC	1610	Intro to Pharmacology	2		
IT*	1090	Computer Applications	3		
MA*	1010	Intro to Medical Terminology	2		
MATH	1410	Elementary & Probability Statistics I	3		
PSY	1010	General Psychology	3		
			27 total		

2024	FALL Semester (Starting HIM Catalog Year)			Credits	Grade	Notes
	HIM	1301	Intro to Health Information Management	3		1 st 8 weeks
	HIM	1311	Legal Aspects of HIM	3		16 weeks
	HIM	1401	Systems in Healthcare Delivery	2		2 nd 8 weeks
			8 total			
2025	SPRING Semester			Credits	Grade	
	HIM	1424	Health Informatics and Information Management	3		
	HIM	1432	Computer Systems in HIM	3		
				6 total		
	SUMMER Semester			Credits	Grade	
	HIM	2410	Management Practices in HIM	2		
				2 total		
	FALL Semester			Credits	Grade	
	HIM	2201	Project Management for the HIM Professional	3		
	HIM	2320	Quality Improvement & Statistics in Healthcare	3		
			6 total			

2026	SPRING Semester			Credits	Grade	
	HIM	2430	Medical Reimbursement Methodologies	2		
	HIM	2160	Coding with ICD-10-CM	3		
				5 total		
	SUMMER Semester			Credits	Grade	
	HIM	2130	Coding with CPT	3		
				3 total		
	FALL Semester			Credits	Grade	
	HIM	2260	Coding with ICD-10-PCS	3		
				3 total		

2027	SPRING Semester: GRADUATION			Credits	Grade	Notes
	HIM	2401	Intermediate Coding with ICD-10 and CPT	2		
	HIM	2910	Professional Practice Experiential Learning	1		
	HIM	2990	HIM Capstone Course	2		
				5 total		

Total semester credits 65 (effective for students applying for Fall Semester 2024 HIMT admissions)

Course Sequence and Numbers/Titles are subject to Change