



Program Handbook 2025-2026

Health Information Technology

Associate of Applied Science Degree

2221 Madison Avenue
Toledo, Ohio 43604

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize the student with the policies of the program, so as to give direction to the student throughout their course of study.

419.251.1313
888.80.MERCY
www.mercycollege.edu

HANDBOOK POLICY/RIGHTS RESERVED

The Mercy College of Ohio Health Information Technology Program Handbook is published by the Mercy College of Ohio Health Information Technology Program and is the Health Information Technology Program's official notification of its policies, procedures, and standards of conduct applicable to students. Each student is responsible for knowledge of the policies, procedures, and standards of conduct described in the Handbook; enrollment is considered acceptance of all conditions discussed in this Handbook. However, the provisions of this Handbook do not constitute a contract between any student and Mercy College of Ohio.

The College reserves the right to change any of the policies, procedures, and standards of conduct at any time as may be necessary in the interest of the College. The College also reserves the right to modify or discontinue any of the services, programs, or activities described in this Handbook. If a material revision to a policy, procedure, or standard of conduct is made and becomes effective during the academic year, students will be notified of such and will be expected to abide by the updated terms. Questions regarding this Handbook should be directed to the Program Director.

Students are expected to be familiar with all the material contained in the Health Information Technology (HIT) Program Handbook and the HIT Resource Center, in addition to relevant policies and procedures in the College Catalog and on the College website.

WELCOME

Welcome to the Health Information Technology Program! We are glad you have made the decision to take advantage of the excellent educational opportunities available at Mercy College of Ohio. During your time here, we will be working closely with you to develop the knowledge base and the skills needed to work both independently and as an important member of the healthcare team.

Our faculty and staff are dedicated to your success and pride themselves on offering personal attention and support. We encourage you to contact our faculty and use the College resources if you need additional information or assistance.

Health Information TECHNOLOGY

Health Information Technology (HIT) incorporates the disciplines of medicine, management, finance, information technology, and law. The Associate of Applied Science Degree Program in Health Information Technology (HIT) prepares graduates to serve the healthcare industry and the public by managing, analyzing, and utilizing data vital for patient care.

Health Information Technicians work to ensure that complete and accurate health records are accessible when and where they are needed while maintaining the highest standards of data integrity, confidentiality, and security.

The state of health information is electronic, patient-centered, and critical in providing quality outcomes to patients. Health Information Technicians use computer applications to analyze patient data for research, compliance, clinical coding, and revenue management purposes.

Health Information Technicians play a key role as information liaisons between clinical, financial, and IT users within their organizations and outside as information “bridges” between providers and consumers.

PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Health Information Technology Program to provide an educational experience that includes the professional and technical skills necessary to prepare students for entry-level positions in the field of health information management.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

In accordance with the College mission statement, the philosophy of the Health Information Technology program is to provide associate degree education based on Christian values. It is a belief that the education of health information management technicians is responsive to national and community needs.

Changes in society influence the values and expectations placed upon healthcare professionals and institutions. The needs and influences of society impact the delivery of

healthcare and the continued development of Health Information Technicians.

The program strives to set realistic and achievable goals and objectives for each student based on professional standards. The goal is to produce a competent practitioner who can function in a rapidly changing healthcare environment.

Education is a continuous process through which learners develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes resulting in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor changes. The faculty facilitates the teaching/learning process through the sequential presentation of concepts, theories, and experiential activities within an environment that promotes mutual trust, critical thinking, and self-development.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Associate of Applied Science Degree in Health Information Technology is designed as a two (2) year full-time program of study. A part-time program of study is also available. The program is designed to prepare technicians to do a wide variety of tasks in a healthcare setting with a minimal amount of direct supervision. In addition, this program is intended to aid the student in developing managerial and problem-solving skills to compliment his/her technical training.

PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

The Health Information Technology Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM) in association with the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA).

CIVIL RIGHTS/NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Mercy College of Ohio is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination on the bases of race, color, national and ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, marital status, military status, religion, pregnancy, genetic information, citizenship status, and any other legally protected class in employment, admissions and other educational programs, services and activities, in accord with applicable federal and state law.

Go to <https://mercycollege.edu/about/compliance-consumer-information> for more information.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Mercy College of Ohio strives to be an inclusive environment in which faculty, staff, students, and the greater community are respected and embraced regardless of variations in thoughts, experiences, values, and traditions.

TITLE IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

The College's Title IX policy also addresses the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Both SaVE and VAWA specifically address sexual violence in the form of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. They expand upon Title IX and provide guidance for addressing issues beyond gender discrimination by the College.

In accordance with the Education Amendments of 1972, 34 CFR Part 106, Mercy College of Ohio has designated a Title IX Coordinator and Deputy Title IX Coordinator (Youngstown location) to ensure compliance regarding sex/gender discrimination of any type. *Discrimination on the basis of sex can include pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions.*

PLEASE DIRECT QUESTIONS/CONCERNS TO:

Dr. Trevor Bates
College President
419.251.1513
titleIX@mercycollege.edu

Betsy Cardwell
Deputy Title IX Coordinator
419.251.1724
Elizabeth.cardwell@mercycollege.edu

Go to <https://mercycollege.edu/student-affairs/title-ix> for more information

COLLEGE CATALOG

In addition to this reference tool, the Undergraduate College Catalog is an important resource during your time here at Mercy College. A PDF version of the College Catalog is available on the College's website for download: www.mercycollege.edu/catalog.

COURSE DELIVERY

All courses, with the possible exception of the Professional Practice Experience (PPE), are delivered online. Due to program and field of study requirements, prospective students are expected to demonstrate computer and keyboarding proficiency.

Computer and technical requirements, including access to specific browsers, may vary based upon individual software applications (AHIMA Virtual Lab 3M Encoder, EHRGo, etc.). It is the students' responsibility to access and use all software applications to complete all assignments, activities, and simulations throughout the program.

GENERAL SYSTEM AND SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

In order to be successful, online students need to have hardware and software that can handle the technological requirements of the coursework. We recommend having access to the following (see Mercy College website for updates):

Screen Size

- Canvas is best viewed at a minimum resolution of 800x600
- If you want to view Canvas on a device with a smaller screen, using the Canvas mobile app is recommended

Operating Systems

- Windows 7 and newer
- Mac OSX 10.6 and newer
- Linux-chromeOS
- Mobile Operating System Native App Support

Computer Speed and Processor

- Use a computer 5 years old or newer when possible
- 1GB of RAM
- 2GHz processor

Browser

- Latest version of Chrome is recommended

Internet Speed

- Along with compatibility and web standards, Canvas has been carefully crafted to accommodate low bandwidth environments
- Minimum of 512kbps

Screen Readers

- Macintosh: VoiceOver (latest version for Safari)
- PC: JAWS (latest version for Internet Explorer)
- PC: NVDA (latest version for Firefox)
- There is no screen reader support for Canvas in Chrome

Please note: Canvas coursework **is not** designed to be completed using a mobile device such as a cell phone. Additionally, not all tablets are compatible with all software applications.

PROCTORED TESTING

A proctored exam is one that is overseen by an impartial individual (called a proctor) who monitors or supervises a student while he or she is taking an exam. The proctor ensures the security and integrity of the exam process.

Proctored testing will be required at only a few select points during the entire program. Students will be able to use proctors within their own local community and will not be

required to be on campus for testing.

Mercy College strongly believes proctored testing safeguards the integrity of your degree and follows best practices in distance learning. Your instructor will indicate when a proctored test is required via the syllabus, course announcements, or email. The Testing Center staff and your instructor will assist you with the process and requirements of your proctored test. Please be advised that some proctoring sites may charge a fee.

CHANGE OF NAME/ADDRESS

Any change in name, local address, permanent address (if different from the local address), or telephone number should be reported to the Program Director and the Student Records Office promptly.

RESIDENCE STATUS

The HIT program is currently authorized in designated states (student residence and PPE site). If you move to an unauthorized state, you may no longer be permitted to continue your studies at Mercy College. State law can change at any point. Please contact the Program Director immediately if you plan to move out of state.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Mercy College of Ohio no longer offers or provides health insurance coverage for any student. Mercy College strongly recommends that all students obtain and maintain appropriate health insurance throughout their program enrollment to cover their healthcare needs. Although Mercy College does not require a student to have health insurance to enroll in a College program, any student who seeks a clinical rotation or similar experience at a hospital or other healthcare facility as part of their program will be required to obtain and maintain health insurance coverage at all times during that rotation or experience. Please see <https://mercycollege.edu/admissions/tuition-fees/pay-your-bill> for more information.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) is the professional organization for those who are interested in the health information field. All Mercy College Health Information Technology students are required to become student members of AHIMA and the student's local chapter (ex. NWOHIMA), if available, during their first semester in the program and renew annually. It is the student's responsibility to ensure continuity of membership throughout the program as access to AHIMA's website (for members-only content) may be required for course assignments.

REGISTERED HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNICIAN

Upon successful completion of the program, graduates will be eligible to sit for the national certification examination offered by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) to become credentialed as a Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT). This examination is offered electronically at testing locations

throughout the United States.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Upon admission to the Health Information Technology Program, each student is assigned to an Academic Advisor. Students are encouraged to meet with their Academic Advisor each semester prior to registering for courses.

It is ultimately the student's responsibility to carefully follow the HIT Program of Study. Most HIT courses are offered only once per year, therefore, if a course is dropped, or a pre-requisite course is not taken in sequence, graduation can be delayed by one year.

If any HIT Program course is dropped, the Program Director or assigned academic advisor should be notified immediately (preferably prior to dropping a course) via e-mail or other communication by the student. Information on how to add or drop a course can be found on the Mercy College website/College Catalog.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE

All Health Information students are encouraged to become involved with Mercy College of Ohio, the Health Information Technology Program, and the local health information professional organization (ex. NWOHIMA).

Please contact the Program Director if interested in any of the following opportunities (position appointment or election may be required):

- Health Information Technology Advisory Committee student representative
- Student liaison to the Northwest Ohio Health Information Management Association
- Mercy College of Ohio Student Government Association program representative

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Employment opportunities exist in any organization that uses health information, including hospitals, managed care organizations, long term care facilities, consulting and law firms, information system vendors, ambulatory care facilities, skilled nursing facilities, home care providers, government agencies, pharmaceutical companies, physician practices, and insurance companies.

Some areas of specialization include coding diagnoses and procedures in patient records for reimbursement and research, privacy roles due to HIPAA legislation, and other clinical data management functions.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Most health information technicians work in hospitals or physicians' offices. Others work in nursing care facilities or for government entities. Technicians typically work at desks or in offices and may spend many hours in front of computer monitors.

HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNICIANS TYPICALLY DO THE FOLLOWING:

- Review patients' records for timeliness, completeness, accuracy, and appropriateness of data
- Organize and maintain data for clinical databases and registries
- Track patient outcomes for quality assessment
- Use classification software to assign clinical codes for reimbursement and data analysis
- Electronically record data for collection, storage, analysis, retrieval, and reporting
- Help to determine requirements for computerized healthcare systems
- Evaluate and support implementation of health information systems
- Compile data and generate reports, such as for disease registry or treatment
- Validate the integrity of patient data
- Ensure privacy, security, and confidentiality of patients' health information

Source: *US Bureau of Labor Statistics*

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

The philosophy behind a Mercy College education is that an individual, regardless of his/her chosen profession, needs to possess both a broad knowledge base and the knowledge that characterizes an educated professional. At Mercy College, this knowledge base and learning outcomes are emphasized throughout the curriculum. Students demonstrate the ability to meet the College's Institutional Learning Outcomes at the appropriate level using assessment rubrics. The rubrics document the students work, abilities, and growth throughout his/her academic career at Mercy College of Ohio.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

AT THE COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM, THE GRADUATE WILL BE ABLE TO:

1. Apply diagnostic and procedural codes and groupings per current guidelines and evaluate for accuracy.
2. Apply legal policies, regulations, principles, and standards for the control, disclosure, retention, and destruction of protected health information.
3. Analyze, compile, and report healthcare data for statistical, planning, research, and health information exchange purposes.
4. Apply policies and procedures for the use of data required in healthcare reimbursement and the revenue cycle management processes.
5. Apply policies, procedures, and processes as they relate to the collection, maintenance, appropriateness, integrity, and presentation of health data.
6. Demonstrate evidence of knowledge in the supporting content areas (pathophysiology, pharmacology, anatomy and physiology, medical terminology, and computer concepts and applications).

7. Adhere to the compliance and regulatory requirements, standards, and guidelines related to health information management.

8. Apply leadership, quality improvement, and management principles, tools, and techniques as it applies to health information management.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS PLAN

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES ARE ASSESSED IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

1. Like all of the academic programs offered by Mercy College, the Health Information Technology Program participates in the Mercy College institutional assessment and assessment of student learning outcomes plans.
2. The Health Information Technology Program assesses student learning and program outcomes through its own program assessment plan and CAHIIM's accreditation process.
3. The Program Advisory Committee is involved with the program planning, evaluation, and improvement.
4. Students complete evaluations of the course and the professor at the end of each semester.
5. Students complete evaluations of the course learning objectives at the end of each semester.
6. Students assess the Professional Practice Experience component of the program.
7. Graduates are asked to complete a Mercy College Graduate/Alumni Survey.
8. Employers are given a satisfaction survey to complete.

GRADING POLICY

The grading scale used in Health Information Technology Program (HIT) courses* is as follows:

- 93-100% - A
- 85-92% - B
- 78-84% - C
- 70-77% - D
- 69% and below - F

*This grading scale is used by all courses with the "HIT" course number prefix. Please refer to course-specific syllabi as grading scales in other courses may vary.

LATE WORK/MISSED ASSIGNMENTS

Due dates may not be the same each week or in each course. It is your responsibility as a student to check your course syllabus, Canvas, Course Announcements, and calendars for information about the course and to ensure you are submitting assignments on time. It is the students' responsibility to communicate with the instructor about extreme circumstances or questions concerning assignments and their due dates.

Late work will only be accepted for two (2) days after the due date and will result in a deduction of 10% per day it is late. This does not apply to quizzes or exams, which must be completed by the due date.

All missed assignments, discussion board posts, quizzes, exams, etc. will result in a grade of zero for the activity and can significantly lower the overall grade for the course.

Health Information Technology students must earn a grade of "C" or higher in all courses within the HIT program.

PROGRAM RETENTION CRITERIA/STANDARDS OF PROGRESS

ONCE ENROLLED IN THE PROGRAM THE STUDENT IS REQUIRED TO:

1. Maintain a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA).
2. Abide by all rules and regulations of the College and the program.
3. Earn a "C" grade, or higher, in all courses of the HIT Program. Any grade lower than a "C" is considered a failure and must be repeated.
4. Students who fail a professional course or withdraw from a professional course failing may repeat the course one time. Students must receive permission from the Dean to repeat a professional course a second time.
5. If a student should fail two core program courses (HIT and BIO), the student may be dismissed from the program.
6. It is the expectation that HIT students should be maintaining grades far higher than the minimum requirements if they expect to be successful in passing the RHIT examination.
7. Due to the rapidly changing nature of the HIT field, it is the expectation that students will complete the program within three (3) years of taking HIT 114. Students must receive permission from the Program Director to extend their program enrollment beyond three (3) years. Professional courses (HIT courses) older than three (3) years may have to be repeated.
8. Appeals processes for program and academic dismissal are found in the Mercy College of Ohio College Catalog.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

Please refer to the College Catalog for details of the Student Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedures.

The faculty will strive to ensure your success at Mercy College. However, your success will depend greatly on your commitment to and participation in the professional online learning community designed to maximize your learning experience. Adhering to the following guidelines will help ensure your own success as well as enrich the learning environment for your colleagues.

STUDENTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO:

- Contribute to the professional learning community through substantial discussion through the threaded or video discussions associated to the online course.
- Complete all assignments on time.
- Make every effort to participate in all activities each module presents in each course.
- Notify the instructor as soon as possible in cases of absence from class.
- Communicate with the instructor immediately if they encounter difficulties in completing their assignments.
- Cooperate with fellow students, faculty, and staff at Mercy College.
- Seek clarification from the instructor when content, guidelines, or expectations are unclear.

It is the student's responsibility to stay on track with all assignments and weekly modules. In addition, it is important to remember that the professors are not available 24/7. Please see course syllabi for the professor's communication policy.

Students are asked to plan their time appropriately for assignment due dates and have contingencies for alternate computers should there be a failure, virus, or power-outage. Missed assignments, discussion board posts, quizzes, exams, etc. may result in a grade of zero for the activity.

CIVILITY

The online classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the rights of others seeking to learn, and respect for the professionalism of the faculty, are maintained. Student conduct which disrupts the teaching/learning process shall not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from the online class.

ONLINE LEARNING NETIQUETTE

Over time, a set of rules (conventions) have emerged to make online communication more pleasant and more effective. Your e-mail messages and discussion board postings should be written in a professional manner, using complete sentences and free of grammatical or spelling errors. In addition, you are to conform to the following guidelines:

Brief is best. Readers find it difficult to process and remember too much information at one time so keep messages short and focus on a single idea or topic. When you need to address multiple ideas or topics, use a separate message for each one. Similarly, use separate files for different kinds of data/information instead of putting it all in one large file.

Be careful with formatting. Don't use fancy formatting (e.g., tables, fonts, layouts) unless you are sure that all users can read it. Don't type in all capital letters—use upper- and lower-case letters, which are easier to read. Don't use a font size that's too big or too small, both of which are hard to read. Ten- or 12-point font is effective. Make messages more readable by using spacing, paragraphing, and subheadings. Don't include graphics, images, or multimedia components (audio/video clips) in messages or files unless you are sure your intended audience can view them.

Provide structure. Take the time to create meaningful subject headings or file names to help readers understand the purpose and context of the information. Also, begin messages and postings with a summary, recap, or reminder of an ongoing discussion to provide context. When people are reading dozens of messages or files, they need a brief orientation to help them understand how the new message relates to what has come before.

Remember the public domain. Think carefully about what you write. First of all, readers can easily forward some or all of your e-mail messages and files to others, so always assume that anything you post could be made quite public. Also, your message may be read by a wide variety of people (particularly if posted to a public forum on the Internet), so be especially sensitive to any form of cultural bias in what you say.

Be kind. Avoid sarcasm and mean-spiritedness. If you read something that upsets you, don't immediately reply with an angry message of your own; either ignore it or wait a day and send a rational response. Remember to be civil and considerate. In general, the same rules apply online as they do in person. Be respectful of other students. Foul discourse will not be tolerated and may be subject to disciplinary action.

-adapted from Greg Kearsley's Guide to Online Education

AHIMA'S CODE OF ETHICS

The Health Information Management (HIM) professional has an obligation to demonstrate actions that reflect values. The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) Code of Ethics sets forth these principles. The code is relevant to all AHIMA members, non-members with the Commission on Certification for Health Informatics and Information Management (CCHIIM) certifications, and students enrolled in a formal certificate or degree granting program directly relevant to AHIMA's Purpose, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve. These purposes strengthen the HIM professional's efforts to improve overall quality of healthcare.

THE AHIMA CODE OF ETHICS SERVES SIX PURPOSES:

- Promotes high standards of HIM practice.
- Summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values.
- Establishes a set of ethical principles to be used to guide decision-making and actions.
- Establishes a framework for professional behavior and responsibilities when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
- Provides ethical principles by which the general public can hold the HIM professional accountable.
- Mentors practitioners new to the field to HIM's mission, values, and ethical principles.

A HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL SHALL:

1. Advocate, uphold, and defend the individual's right to privacy and the doctrine of confidentiality in the use and disclosure of information.
2. Put service and the health and welfare of persons before self-interest and conduct oneself in the practice of the profession so as to bring honor to oneself, their peers, and to the health information management profession.
3. Preserve, protect, and secure personal health information in any form or medium and hold in the highest regards to health information and other information of a confidential nature obtained in an official capacity, taking into account the applicable statutes and regulations.
4. Refuse to participate in or conceal unethical practices or procedures and report such practices.
5. Use technology, data, and information resources in the way they are intended to be used.
6. Advocate for appropriate uses of information resources across the healthcare ecosystem.
7. Recruit and mentor students, peers and colleagues to develop and strengthen professional workforce.
8. Represent the profession to the public in a positive manner.
9. Advance health information management knowledge and practice through continuing education, research, publications, and presentations.
10. Perform honorably health information management association responsibilities, either appointed or elected, and preserve the confidentiality of any privileged information made known in any official capacity.
11. State truthfully and accurately one's credentials, professional education, and experiences.
12. Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration in situations supporting health information practice.
13. Respect the inherent dignity and worth of every person.

Source: American Health Information Management Association

STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CODING

In addition to abiding by the Code of Ethics, students are also required to abide by the American Health Information Management Association's Standards of Ethical Coding:

- 1. Apply accurate, complete, and consistent coding practices that yield quality data.*
- 2. Gather and report all data required for internal and external reporting, in accordance with applicable requirements and data set definitions.*
- 3. Assign and report, in any format, only the codes and data that are clearly and consistently supported by health record documentation in accordance with applicable code set and abstraction conventions, and requirements.*
- 4. Query and/or consult as needed with the provider for clarification and additional documentation prior to final code assignment in accordance with acceptable healthcare industry practices.*
- 5. Refuse to participate in, support, or change reported data and/or narrative titles, billing data, clinical documentation practices, or any coding related activities intended to skew or misrepresent data and their meaning that do not comply with requirements.*
- 6. Facilitate, advocate, and collaborate with healthcare professionals in the pursuit of accurate, complete and reliable coded data and in situations that support ethical coding practices.*
- 7. Advance coding knowledge and practice through continuing education, including but not limited to meeting continuing education requirements.*
- 8. Maintain the confidentiality of protected health information in accordance with the Code of Ethics.³*
- 9. Refuse to participate in the development of coding and coding related technology that is not designed in accordance with requirements.*
- 10. Demonstrate behavior that reflects integrity, shows a commitment to ethical and legal coding practices, and fosters trust in professional activities.*
- 11. Refuse to participate in and/or conceal unethical coding, data abstraction, query practices, or any inappropriate activities related to coding and address any perceived unethical coding related practices.*

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (HIT)

To be qualified for the Health Information Technology program, individuals must be able to meet both academic standards and the technical standards listed below, with or without reasonable accommodation(s). It is the student's responsibility to request reasonable accommodations following the procedures outlined in the *Mercy College of Ohio Undergraduate Catalog* or on the College's website at www.mercycollege.edu/student-affairs/accessibility; requests for reasonable accommodations will be reviewed and considered by the College. For further information regarding services and resources for students with disabilities and/or to request accommodations, please contact the Office of Accessibility Services at 419.251.1784 or ADA504@mercycollege.edu.

THESE STANDARDS ARE NOT INTENDED TO DETER ANY STUDENT WHO MAY BE ABLE TO COMPLETE THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROGRAM WITH REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS.

- Ability to learn in the online classroom and various educational settings.
- Ability to communicate in sensitive and effective interactions with patients, families, and members of the health care team.
- Ability to speak, hear, observe, read, and understand the English language in a manner sufficient to provide safe and effective patient care.
- Ability to effectively use technology, information systems, and communication devices that support safe and effective health information management practice.
- Ability to think critically, solve problems, exercise professional judgment, promptly complete responsibilities, and make decisions for the care of persons, families, and/or communities across the health continuum and in a variety of settings.
- Ability to show concern for others, compassion, human dignity, ethical conduct, and accountability.
- Ability to adapt to and function effectively to stressful situations in both the classroom and professional practical settings.
- Ability to meet physical and strength demands required to complete health information related tasks in both paper-based and electronic health record formats.
- Ability to meet the attendance requirements of the Professional Practice Experience as scheduled.
- Be poised, neat, well groomed, tactful, diplomatic, and discreet.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF PROTECTED INFORMATION

By law, all information contained in a patient's medical record/electronic health record (protected health information) is considered to be confidential. Information pertaining to the facility or relating to physicians or employees is considered confidential as well. All information that is discussed or made available in class or in the clinical (PPE) facilities is therefore considered confidential and may not be discussed outside of the classroom or clinic.

Students may not disclose confidential information to unauthorized individuals, including family and/or friends. Failure to respect confidential information will result in dismissal from the program.

All students are required to sign facility-specific privacy statements prior to participating in any laboratory, PPE, or clinical activities that are held in a hospital, physician's office, ambulatory care facility, or other health-related agency that provides custodial care, diagnosis, treatment, surgery, therapy, or any health-related care. Students who refuse to sign confidentiality statements will be dismissed from their program.

ONLINE EXAMINATIONS AND QUIZZES

Online examinations and quizzes are an integral component within the online courses. Exams are strictly timed and are administered in a secure browser. Students must set aside the appropriate amount of time to devote to taking an exam. It is highly recommended that students NOT wait until the last minute (just before the deadline) to begin an online exam, as certain technical issues are often unforeseen and may delay the students' ability to access the exam.

Online exams are to be treated with the same respect and integrity as exams taken in a classroom setting. Students are NOT to print (including print screen), copy, or share exam materials and questions with any other student at any time, even after an exam deadline has passed. This includes but is not limited to posting exam questions in discussion boards, on social media, or email exam questions to any student. Students found in violation of this policy may be subject to the College's disciplinary process for academic dishonesty.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Because this is an online program (with the exception of the PPE), your attendance is based on your activity and participation inside Canvas. It is the expectation that students will meet all deadlines.

Please refer to your course syllabus as instructors may have specific attendance/participation requirements.

The Professional Practice Experience (PPE) Attendance Policy will be addressed in the Professional Practice Experience (PPE) packet and students must meet the minimum hour requirement.

THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE STUDENTS EXPECTED PARTICIPATION:

- Log in to the course on a regular basis. You should be logging into each course a minimum of three (3) times per week, including weeks with holidays. It is helpful to set a routine to log in at specific times throughout the week to break up the workload and keep up with ongoing assignments or discussions. If a situation that might cause multiple days of class to be missed arises, discuss it with your instructor in advance or as soon as possible.
- Check Mercy College email, course Virtual Office, and Course Announcements often and on a regular basis: Communications between students and/or instructors, will take place most commonly through email and Course Announcements. Important updates and reminders are posted to the Course Announcements.
- Communicate with your instructors to keep them informed of any situations that might arise or any help you might need.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCE (PPE)

Each student is required to complete a Professional Practice Experience (PPE) prior to graduation, typically in their final semester. The PPE provides for virtual and/or on-site learning in a health care setting or utilizing healthcare related software applications. It involves the practice of tasks and functions in a healthcare facility under the supervision of a practitioner. This provides an opportunity to better understand and correlate theory and actual performance.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCE (PPE) PLACEMENT

PPEs will be available in acute care hospitals, in non-traditional facilities, and in some cases remotely/virtually. The College cannot guarantee student placement in the PPE site of his/her choice. Although every effort will be made to place a student in a location relatively close to their place of residence, student PPE sites may be located up to 60 miles from the student's home. In cases where a PPE site is unavailable within 60 miles, an alternative remote/virtual PPE *may* be utilized.

PPE SITE ASSIGNMENT IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING:

- Valid contract between the College and PPE site
- Site currently accepting HIT students
- Site able to meet the course objectives
- Student is eligible for PPE placement
- Days and hours of student's availability
- Student completes and submits PPE application by the stated deadline
- Completion of all Health Requirements
- Criminal Background Check & Drug Screening Results

Eligible students will receive a PPE packet containing pertinent information regarding the PPE expectation and placement process. Supervision and instruction are provided by the Health Information Technology PPE Coordinator and the PPE facilitator/designee.

Students must accept the PPE placement the semester it is assigned. If the student is unable to accept the assigned PPE, or is not eligible for placement, he/she must direct a letter to the Program Director stating the reason and a solution as soon as possible and before the end of the semester preceding the PPE. The HIT/PPE Coordinator, Program Director, and the Health Sciences Dean will evaluate the situation and make recommendations. The student understands that placement is conditional on availability. If the student is unable to meet this commitment, he or she may be dismissed from the program.

High academic performance does not, in and of itself, assure continuance in the program or placement in a PPE site if the student is otherwise deemed unsuitable. Placement for PPEs requires "C" grades in all HIT Professional pre-requisite courses prior to placement.

Along with academic excellence, division approval is required for placement in a PPE facility. Inappropriate behavior may preclude PPE placement.

Misconduct throughout the program which will prevent PPE placement includes, but is NOT LIMITED TO:

- Violation of Mercy College of Ohio or program policies, the student code of conduct, or any PPE facility policy.
- Any form of dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating on written, oral, or practical examinations.
- Incomplete or false information on health records or any documents.
- Any conduct the PPE site deems unsuitable for placement (including criminal background check results).
- Failure to earn a grade of "C" or higher on all prerequisite courses.
- Failure to complete all background and health requirements by the stated deadline.
- Failure to complete/submit PPE Application to HIT Lab/PPE Coordinator by the stated deadline.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS, DRUG SCREEN, & CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

Each student is required to complete a health screening, vaccinations, background check, finger printing, and drug test prior to being placed at a PPE site. Students may request waivers or extensions for vaccinations, which may be approved or denied by clinical facilities. If waivers are denied, it will prevent placement in clinical experiences and progression in the academic program. The College will make a reasonable attempt to find alternate clinical (PPE) placements for students seeking extensions or waivers of vaccinations, but it is at the discretion of clinical (PPE) sites whether students are permitted to participate in professional practice experiences.

Mercy College utilizes CastleBranch as the depository for clinical documentation. All information submitted to CastleBranch will be reviewed to ensure it meets the program

requirements. Students are responsible for all costs associated with a CastleBranch account along with criminal background checks, drug screens, and health requirements. Estimated cost of a CastleBranch account is \$200. This amount is subject to change at any time.

Health requirements must be completed prior to Professional Practice Experience (PPE) Placement. Please note that PPE facilities may have additional site-specific requirements. Students assigned to those facilities must fulfill all requirements prior to starting their PPE. The College cannot guarantee PPE placement based on health requirements and results (failure to complete the PPE requirement will result in dismissal from the program). PPE Packets will be made available through the Program Resource Center to eligible students. Information related to health requirements are available on the Mercy College of Ohio website. Students will also receive an email outlining the submission process.

In addition to submitting all health requirements, a drug screen and a criminal background check must be completed prior to the Professional Practice Experience (PPE) placement. Information related to location, procedure, and deadlines of the criminal background check/drug screening are available on the Mercy College of Ohio website and will be included in the PPE packet. Students will also receive an email outlining the submission process.

Criminal background checks are to be completed before the stated deadline. Students failing to complete all requirements will not be assigned to a PPE site. The College cannot guarantee PPE placement based on criminal background check and drug screening results.

Health Information Technology students are advised that Professional Practice Experience (PPE) sites reserve the right to decline placement to those who have been convicted of a felony or other behavior deemed inappropriate by the PPE site. Students who do not meet all program requirements, including PPE completion, will be dismissed from the program. If you have any questions or concerns (including, but not limited to prior arrests and/or convictions) please contact the Program Director as soon as possible.

*Please note that PPE facilities may have additional site-specific health and legal requirements.

CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCE (PPE) ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Students receiving instruction at affiliated PPE sites during the Professional Practice Experience (PPE) are under the jurisdiction of the College. Students frequently have the false impression that assignment to a site is permanent.

The College will immediately withdraw any student from a PPE site for reasons of which are impeding the student's ability to do the work required, attendance, performance, or at the request of the PPE site supervisor.

BEHAVIORS THAT WILL PREVENT A STUDENT FROM CONTINUED ASSIGNMENT TO THE PPE ARE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Violation of Mercy College of Ohio policies or student code of conduct, or any clinical/PPE education site policy.
- Any breach of the Standards of Ethics as prescribed by AHIMA.
- Excessive absenteeism (including arriving late and/or leaving early)/Failure to complete minimum hours required.
- Incomplete or false information on health records or any documents.
- Failure to maintain strict confidentiality of patient information/Violations of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
- Failure to notify both the PPE site and the College when absent.
- Cheating on written or practical examinations. Dishonesty, avoiding responsibility, and evidence of lying.
- Inconsiderate, unprofessional, discourteous, and disrespectful treatment of patients, visitors, PPE instructors, or health information/facility staff.
- Entering the PPE site or College under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Drinking alcoholic beverages on PPE site or College property.
- Illegally obtaining, possessing, distributing, or using narcotics, amphetamines, or hallucinogenic substances.
- Using abusive, obscene, or threatening language to PPE instructor, health information/facility staff, patients, visitors, or fellow students.
- Unsatisfactory technical performance.
- Uncooperative, hostile, negative, disruptive, or non-constructive attitudes toward PPE instructor(s), site staff, visitor(s), or fellow students.
- Taking pictures of any type at a PPE site and/or posting remarks via social media.
- Violating any policy/procedure/guideline within the PPE packet, including dress code violations.

Note: Any student who is dismissed from a PPE education site because of being deemed “unsafe,” may be automatically dismissed from the program. Please refer to the College Catalog for details of the Student Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedures.

If a student is dismissed from the PPE site for any reason, placement at an alternative site is not guaranteed and is unlikely.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCE (PPE) EXPENSES

Course tuition and fees, textbooks, transportation costs, site specific expenses (parking fees, health requirements, screenings, etc.), CastleBranch account, professional conferences (NWOHIMA symposium, etc.), and any other related expenses are the responsibility of the student.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

All students admitted to the program are provided with required professional liability insurance by the College as part of their tuition and fees.

SERVICE WORK POLICY FOR PPE

No stipend is paid to Health Information Technology students during PPE. The PPE is education and, as such, is just as important as time spent in the classroom. Students may not take the responsibility or the place of qualified staff. However, after demonstrating proficiency, students may be permitted to undertake certain defined activities with appropriate supervision and direction. Students may be employed in the field of study outside regular educational hours, provided the work does not interfere with regular academic responsibilities.

CELL/SMART PHONES AND CALLS DURING PPE

No personal cell/smart phones (includes phone calls, text messaging, social media, smart phone apps use, taking pictures, email, etc.) are to be used during the Professional Practice Experience (PPE).

DRESS CODE DURING PPE

Professional attire is required for all PPE sites, including remote/virtual sites, so that you will represent the College and the profession of Health Information Management well. The primary concern is that all students are clean and neat. All situations may not be covered in these guidelines and are left up to the discretion of the HIT/PPE Coordinator, HIT Program Director, and/or the PPE Site Facilitator. Wearing jeans (regardless of color), pajama pants, yoga pants, etc., athletic shoes or flip flops, tank tops, and facial/tongue jewelry (with the exception of one pair of professional earrings in the earlobes) at PPE sites is prohibited. Professional attire should also be worn during virtual/remote PPEs when interacting via Zoom or other visual means.

SUGGESTED DRESS CODE

Females: Suit; skirt/blouse; tailored dress; dress slacks with blouse or sweater. Nylon hose or dress socks. Dress shoes.

Males: Suit; polo/dress shirt, a tie (optional), dress pants. Dress shoes/socks.

Students must adhere to the site's dress code.

WHEN AT THE PPE SITE (including Zoom meetings):

1. Name tags must be worn while on duty at the PPE site.
2. Makeup should be natural looking and appropriate for daytime.
3. Jewelry should be conservative and in good taste; facial jewelry must be removed, if applicable.
4. Hair will be a "natural" color (not green, purple, blue, etc.) with hair accessories being

small/tasteful.

5. Beards, mustaches, and sideburns must be clean and neatly trimmed.
6. Nails should be clean, of appropriate length, and neutral/business appropriate shades of color. Artificial nails are not to be worn in patient areas.
7. Maintain a neat, clean, professional appearance at all times.
8. Chewing gum is prohibited during PPE sessions.
9. Tattoos are not to be displayed. Care should be taken to cover tattoos.
10. Perfume/cologne is to be kept to a minimum and should not be worn if going to patient areas.
11. Open-toed shoes should not be worn in patient areas.

Dress in all PPE sites will be supervised and may be modified by the individual site. Students may be dismissed from a PPE site if dress code is violated and/or cannot be accommodated by the site.

Professional Practice Experience (PPE) site business phones are not to be used to make or to receive personal phone calls except in the event of an emergency. Students may make personal calls on their scheduled break or during lunch from cell phones outside of the PPE Site.

AHIMA'S ENTRY-LEVEL COMPETENCIES

Upon graduation from an accredited program, the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) requires that all students have entry-level competency for each of AHIMA's Domains. The following entry-level Competencies (Student Learning Outcomes) will be incorporated throughout the curriculum: -*AHIMA*

Domain I. Data Governance, Content & Structure

- I.1. Describe healthcare organizations from the perspective of key stakeholders
- I.2. Apply policies, regulations, and standards to the management of information
- I.3. Identify policies and strategies to achieve data integrity
- I.4. Determine compliance of health record content within the health organization
- I.5. Explain the use of classification systems, clinical vocabularies, and nomenclatures
- I.6. Describe components of data dictionaries and data sets
- I.6. (DM) Evaluate data dictionaries and data sets for compliance with governance standards

Domain II. Information Protection: Access, Use, Disclosure, Privacy & Security

- II.1. Apply privacy strategies to health information
- II.2. Apply security strategies to health information

- II.3. Identify compliance requirements throughout the health information life cycle

Domain III. Informatics, Analytics and Data Use

- III.1. Apply health informatics concepts to the management of health information
- III.2. Utilize technologies for health information management
- III.3. Calculate statistics for healthcare operations
- III.4. Report healthcare data through graphical representations
- III.5. Describe research methodologies used in healthcare
- III.6. Describe the concepts of managing data
- III.6. (DM) Manage data within a database system
- III.7. Summarize standards for the exchange of health information
- III.7. (DM) Identify standards for exchange of health information

Domain IV. Revenue Cycle Management

- IV.1. Validate assignment of diagnostic and procedural codes and groupings in accordance with official guidelines
- IV.1. (RM) Determine diagnosis and procedure codes and groupings according to official guidelines
- IV.2. Describe components of revenue cycle management and clinical documentation improvement
- IV.2. (RM) Evaluate revenue cycle processes
- IV.3. Summarize regulatory requirements and reimbursement methodologies
- IV.3. (RM) Evaluate compliance with regulatory requirements and reimbursement methodologies

Domain V. Health Law & Compliance

- V.1. Apply legal processes impacting health information
- V.2. Demonstrate compliance with external forces
- V.3. Identify the components of risk management related to health information Management
- V.4. Identify the impact of policy on healthcare

Domain VI. Organizational Management & Leadership

- VI.1. Demonstrate fundamental leadership skills
- VI.2. Identify the impact of organizational change
- VI.3. Identify human resource strategies for organizational best practices
- VI.4. Utilize data-driven performance improvement techniques for decision making
- VI.5. Utilize financial management processes
- VI.6. Examine behaviors that embrace cultural diversity
- VI.7. Assess ethical standards of practice
- VI.8. Describe consumer engagement activities
- VI.9. Identify processes of workforce training for healthcare organizations

MERCY COLLEGE OF OHIO
HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (HIT) PROGRAM
ACKNOWLEDGMENT STATEMENT
2025-2026

I, _____, have received a copy of the Student Handbook of the Health Information Technology (HIT) Program of Mercy College of Ohio.

I understand that it is my responsibility to read ALL the material contained in this handbook and abide by all program, College, and Professional Practice Experience (PPE) site policies.

I agree to abide by the regulations and the Confidentiality of Protected Health Information Policy described within. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions for clarification of all policies.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

To be qualified for the Mercy College HIT program, individuals must be able to meet both academic standards and the technical standards listed previously, with or without reasonable accommodation(s). It is a student's responsibility to request reasonable accommodations following the procedures outlined in the Mercy College of Ohio Undergraduate Catalog or on the College's website at www.mercycollege.edu/student-affairs/accessibility; requests for reasonable accommodations will be reviewed and considered by the College.

For further information regarding services and resources for students with disabilities and/or to request accommodations, please contact the Office of Accessibility Services at 419- 251-1784 or ADA504@mercycollege.edu.

These standards are not intended to deter any student who may be able to complete the requirements of the program with reasonable accommodation.

Please indicate below (check one):

- ☐ I **can** meet the technical standards with or without reasonable accommodations.
- ☐ I **cannot** meet the technical standards with or without reasonable accommodations.

DATE

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

STUDENT'S PRINTED NAME

*Please submit the signed acknowledgement statement to the Program Director through the Program Resource Center in the CANVAS Learning Management System.