



Health Information Technology Clinical Rotation Policy

Introduction

All students in the Panola College Health Information Technology degree program will be placed in a professional practice experience (PPE) as a requirement of CAHIIM-accredited program requirement. PPE refers to the internship or affiliation, or clinical practicum the student participates in throughout the educational program and is an opportunity to reinforce the skills and competencies learned in the classroom. The PPE is an integral component of the student's education process and is essential to the student's career development. It serves to strengthen learning through directed experiences.

The on-site PPE:

- Exposes students to the evolution of roles and technology that have not yet reached program curriculum, giving them clearer insight to necessary competencies in the changing environment;
- Gives students a context for pursuing lifelong learning and professional growth;
- Gives HIM staff at the affiliation site the opportunity to engage with students and perhaps consider their own professional growth through education and certification;
- Provides the site mentor with an opportunity to evaluate, and provide feedback to the educational program on program effectiveness based on student strengths and weaknesses.

Defining the PPE

- The PPE is a credit-based course, which applies toward degree completion, and requires tuition, fees and costs as normally occurs according to institutional policy.
- The college evaluates the appropriateness of the site to ensure they are placing students into secure and productive environments that further their education
- The PPE site receives a copy of the learning outcomes and acknowledges its responsibility to the student by signing the PPE learning outcomes form
- Assigned faculty make contact with each student during the PPE (either in person or remotely) to ascertain the student's progress toward completing her or his goals
- The site supervisor completes an evaluation of the student's experience, and this evaluation is considered when determining the student's final grade for the PPE
- Organizations with AHIMA-credentialed staff are eligible to claim 5 CEUs for providing on-site mentorship and supervision of students. The student's daily log is used to vet the involvement of the credentialed member.

Strategies to ensure meaningful PPE

Depending on the level and goal of the PPE, best practices includes a combination of job rotation in which the student completes the tasks of each job type, job shadowing of managers and directors

during departmental and organization meetings, and project-based tasks that take a period of time to complete.

Evidence of a meaningful PPE can be vetted by an evaluation of the deliverables such as:

- Daily log
- Activity journal
- Work portfolio
- Project completion report
- Oral presentation of the project findings (to site/faculty/student cohort)

Affiliation-sites are organizations that agree to take HIT students for a non-paid or paid (note: some sites especially if vendor-related, will provide a stipend for the students) extended period of time in order to aid the students in blending classroom theory with practical application. The students should be supervised and considered a contributing member of the PPE site staff. Depending on the type of PPE, the students will observe and experience day-to-day health information-related operations, provide documentation and recommendations in workflow, and complete special projects with supervision.

Organizations serving as affiliation sites

While traditional PPE sites are acute care hospitals or non-acute care sites such as ambulatory clinics, physician practices, long-term acute care hospitals, skilled nursing and long-term care facilities and home health or hospice centers, any site where health information is managed, examined, or used for administrative, financial or clinical decision-making can be a site for students to be placed for PPE. This includes but is not limited to:

Academic institutions	Acute care hospitals	Ambulatory clinics
Ambulatory surgery centers	Behavioral health facilities	Blood centers
Chiropractic	Coding agencies	Compliance organizations
Consulting agencies	Data analysis organizations	Dental offices
Dialysis centers	Disease specialty centers	Health departments
Health information exchanges	Healthcare software companies	HIM service providers
Home health agencies	Hospice care centers	Hospital associations
Hospitals	Information technology depts.	Insurance agencies
Law offices	Long-term care facilities	Outpatient behavioral health
Pediatric hospitals	Pharmaceutical companies	Physical therapy and sports rehab
Physician offices	Primary care associations	Professional associations
Public health agencies	Rehabilitation facilities	State agencies
System vendors	University health centers	Veterans administration

Considerations for Vendor and other nontraditional PPE sites

It is understood that vendor settings often have remote staff, and if this is the case students may also conduct their PPE remotely if in accordance with the school's policy. The students can learn how remote staff are managed and this is a valuable experience in and of itself. Vendors are asked to ensure appropriate access to materials that are available. The students and school PPE coordinators are encouraged to start planning well in advance to allow vendor-based PPE sites with the time necessary to make arrangements for remote access to systems and materials. If it is not

possible to provide students with system access, vendor sites can consider using test or training systems.

School PPE coordinators are also encouraged to provide clear direction to vendor sites about what their specific academic level of students can be expected to do and know. Vendors that are new to the concept of hosting students may need more direction than other site hosts.

Depending on the situation and/or facility, a corporate agreement, memorandum of understanding or generic model agreement is appropriate. The content of the document may address HIPAA training, background checks, required immunizations, TB status, and liability insurance. Affiliation agreements differ from site to site and state to state in regards to legal requirements.

Preparing the Student

Healthcare delivery has changed dramatically and continues to change rapidly. With the increased complexity of healthcare environments, there is a need to provide professional experiences that assist students and graduates to make the transition to the work setting with more realistic expectations and maximal preparation.

Students should work closely with staff to increase clinical skills, knowledge, competence and confidence. The selected project or activity can be accomplished through multiple communication modes (depending on the student sponsor's preference and technology available). Completed projects may be presented face to face, via phone or conference lines, webinars, secure e-mail, video conferences, and web-based portals or drop-boxes. Site mentors should work with educators to establish the best projects for the student/organization's needs. CAHIIM accreditation standard regarding PPE states, "PPE, whether on-site or through simulations must relate to higher level competencies and result in a learning experience for the student and/or a deliverable to a practice site. The PPE must provide the student with the opportunity to reinforce competencies and skill sets."

Gaining CEUs for Credentialed Staff

When a facility accepts an HIT student for PPE, the time spent coordinating the visit and mentoring the student can count toward maintenance of professional CEUs. An individual credentialed member can claim five CEUs per year (or ten CEUs per two-year cycle) for work performed with HIM students on their practicum visits. The student's daily log should serve as proof of time the student spent with credentialed members. Panola College will send out certificates to the sites after the student has completed the site visit.

Preparing for the PPE

Panola College will make initial contact with the site and get acceptance for placing the student. Panola College will notify the student by week 4 of the semester with the contact information for the site. Students will attend the onsite hours between weeks 11 and 15 of the semester. It is suggested that the student reach out to that person, to introduce themselves prior to their first day. The student may use this as an opportunity to share their resume and cover letter. During this contact, the

student should verify any instructions such as reporting location, parking, and requirements for orientation (if not previously provided by the school coordinator).

Clinical Information for HIT Student

Facility: _____

Facility Address: _____

Preceptor/Contact Number: _____

Initial Reporting Date/Time: _____

Additional Information: _____

Guidelines while attending PPE

General Guidelines

1. The clinical instructor, office employees, nurses, and/or physician will supervise clinical experience.
2. Questions or problems incurred should be taken to the appropriate individual in charge if it concerns rules or regulations. Questions concerning procedures, techniques and theory may be directed to the preceptor in the department.
3. Students must observe all facility regulations for routing work and written and electronic communications.
4. Students may not request access to patient information or results that are not part of the current learning experience.
5. Students must not, under any circumstances, discuss patient information with any staff member outside of the current assignment or with other students, family members, friends, or patients.
6. Physicians and other medical professionals should be addressed by their title.
7. The student will remember at all times that he/she is a guest at the facility and will treat all employees and patients with respect.
8. If a student has concerns with a site and/or preceptor (including disagreements about clinic policies and procedures) the student MAY NOT address the clinical

site. These concerns should be brought to the course instructor FIRST.

Appearance

The clinical student will at all times:

1. Exhibit clean body and hair (both head and facial).
2. Style hair in a well-controlled manner that is off the collar. Hair that is past shoulder length (male or female) must be tied back.
3. Keep mustache and/or beards short and neatly trimmed.
4. Keep nails clean and neat. No false/fake nails or tips permitted as they harbor bacteria.
5. Wear minimal jewelry. Dangling chains and long earrings are not permitted. Piercings other than in ears should be removed. Follow the dress code policy in the HIT student handbook. Only jewelry allowed is one set of stud earrings, wedding band, and a watch. Any visible tattoos must be covered with clothing or a Band-Aid.
6. Refrain from using strong perfumes or colognes.
7. Wear well-fitting, wrinkle-free NAVY scrubs with Panola College logo, neither too tight, nor too baggy.
8. Keep shoes clean and in good condition.
9. Wear makeup that is appropriate to the workplace.
10. Wear appropriate undergarments.
11. NO TOBACCO while in uniform.

Communication

To promote comfortable interactions, the student will:

1. Speak with an appropriate tone and volume of voice.
2. Use inoffensive language (no slang or profanity).
3. Refrain from discussing personal issues and concerns with clients, family, and others in the workplace.
4. Exhibit courteous telephone manners.
5. Be respectful and appropriate in a verbal and non-verbal communication.
6. Present a pleasant demeanor and attitude by being polite and interested in the learning process.

Professionalism

The student will act in a consistently professional manner by:

1. Students should demonstrate professional conduct throughout the course of the PPE.
2. Students should demonstrate initiative by completing activities as assigned, asking appropriate questions for clarification as needed and/or research as necessary from prior educational materials to complete assignments.
3. Students should complete assignments early, asking for additional work rather than waiting for someone to notice.

- There may be times when clinical personnel are unavailable to work with the students. During those times students should use initiative to interview staff, maintain a PPE log of activity, review policy manuals, and complete assigned project work.
- 4. Students may not receive supervision by the department manager/director as these activities may be delegated to other individuals within the department; as such, the student should take direction just as they would with their PPE site supervisor.
- 5. Students should not use cell phones during working hours, including texting. They should make personal calls and texts only at breaks and lunch times. Additionally, the use of other electronic devices and applications is generally considered unprofessional in the PPE setting.
- 6. Web access should be limited to the scope required by the organization and within the assigned project. Students should not surf the web during working hours; this includes checking e-mail, logging into social networking web sites and accessing school learning management systems, unless requested to do so by the site for a specific purpose (i.e., downloading a form or researching a topic).
- 7. Students should demonstrate a professional attitude during any unexpected situations that might occur.
 - They should assist, if possible; otherwise, be a silent observer or remove oneself from the situation.
 - They should remember that much can be learned by observing how other professionals handle difficult situations.
- 8. Students should utilize professional communication.
 - They should be cognizant of the professional titles used in the healthcare setting. Medical professionals, patients, and coworkers should be addressed in the appropriate manner at all times (for example, Doctor Jones, Mrs. Smith, or Mr. Johnson).
 - Students should maintain professional relationships at all times and be appreciative of facility personnel at all skill levels and job classifications.
 - As professionals, students are expected to handle minor difficulties that arise on one's own. However, if attempts to solve the situation have been unsuccessful, these matters should be brought to the attention of the PPE site manager and the academic PPE coordinator.
 - Students should avoid gossiping or complaining with site staff and/or other students. If there are issues, they should be discussed with the academic PPE coordinator.
 - Students should maintain a daily log of activities accomplished during their PPE in accordance with school instructions. This log should be shared with their site manager periodically to see what has been accomplished, what needs to be completed in the time remaining, and what activities can be added or deleted.
- 9. Ethics and Confidentiality
 - Students are expected to:
 - Adhere to [AHIMA's Code of Ethics](#)
 - Adhere to [AHIMA's Standards of Ethical Coding](#)
 - Abide by the school's Code of Student Conduct
 - Abide by applicable facility policies and procedures

- Abide by HIPAA and other regulations, as appropriate.

Attendance

1. Student's time in the clinic will be recorded using the provided time sheet. It is the student's responsibility to write down their times. The clinical preceptor will also keep track of student time separately.
2. Students unable to report to their clinical practicum when scheduled must notify the site as far in advance as possible. *The site is to be notified first*. The instructor must also be notified. YOU MAY NOT leave a message on voice mail at the clinical site. You must speak to a staff member- get the name of the person you speak to and document it. You MAY leave a message for your instructor at Panola on their voicemail or with secretarial staff. **Your instructor WILL NOT call the facility for you. It is YOUR responsibility!** You must give a valid reason for your absence.
3. It will be the responsibility of the student to make up all clinical hours when they are absent. This is to be arranged with the clinical preceptor. Students should not ask the facility to make special arrangements for the makeup time.
4. The disciplinary action policy for issuing a demerit for absences will be applied to all clinical absences.

Disciplinary Procedures

1. The Clinical Preceptor will report any student who violates these codes or facility regulations, in writing. This is especially important in matters concerning confidential patient information. The report should include the nature of the infraction, the date, the student's name, and the name of any other staff members involved.
2. The report will be sent to the Instructor, Program Director and reviewed with the student and the Clinical Instructor.
3. If the Program Director and Supervisor agree that the incident is of a serious nature, the student may be suspended from the program for the semester. If more than 3 incidents occur OR the incident is severe, the student may be dismissed from the program.

Student responsibilities

Pre-PPE Check-list:

- Attend Orientation for HIT program
- Background check complete
- Drug screen complete
- Earned "C" or better in all previous program courses
- Physical Exam completed
- Preceptor Agreement completed
- Proof of all Immunizations completed
- Read and understand syllabus
- Transportation to and from clinical site secured

Deliverables

The student should refer to the course syllabus for instruction regarding grade determination. Regardless of these requirements, students should complete deliverables as if holding a position within the facility. Therefore, all assignments must be professional in appearance and free from errors such as grammar and spelling. Exemplary projects and assignments may be used to inform the site of future needs and/or provide a resource.

Thank-you note

Students are encouraged to send personal, handwritten thank-you notes to their PPE sites. Notes can include highlights from their experience and list things that expanded their HIM understanding. Students should recognize individuals that contributed to their experience. Students should send handwritten personal thank-you notes to specific individuals, and share how they contributed to their experience.

Post PPE

A PPE placement is not a guarantee or offer of employment. However, many times students who demonstrate competency and are a good fit for the team receive additional consideration or recommendation when new employment opportunities arise. All individuals with whom a student interacts during the PPE have the potential to offer a professional referral or recommendation. Upon conclusion of PPE, students are encouraged to take advantage of networking opportunities with HIM professionals whenever they are available. Attending state association meetings may provide additional opportunities to network with site contacts and their peers. The student may also participate in regional associations that can provide the same opportunities within their local communities. Many times networking through these events provides recent graduates with exposure to potential employers. In addition, students should be cognizant of how social media may reflect their professional image. Professional and personal networking tools should be utilized appropriately.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HIT CLINICAL ROTATION POLICY

I, _____, have reviewed and understand that while attending clinical rotations at my assigned site(s), I must abide by the rules and policies established by my site(s). These rules and policies may vary depending on the site(s) to which I am assigned.

This pertains to, but is not limited to, dress code, hours worked, assigned rotation, assigned duties, patient confidentiality, use of facility computer system and additional information and policies specific to my clinical site(s).

I understand that I am representing Panola College and the HIT program while at my clinical sites and must also conduct myself according to the policies established in this manual. Failure to comply with policies set by Panola College and/or my clinical site will result in discipline up to and including dismissal from the HIT program and Panola College.

Student Signature _____

Date _____