



HIM Fact Sheet

Careers in Health Information Management

The first step in your career planning process is to discover your interests and then match them to careers. If you have an interest in healthcare and information technology, health information management (HIM) may be the right career choice for you. As one of the fastest growing occupations in one of the fastest growing industries, a HIM career places you right where the expanding arena of healthcare meets the cutting edge of technology.

What is Health Information Management

HIM professionals play a critical role in maintaining, collecting and analyzing the data that doctors, nurses and other healthcare providers rely on to deliver quality healthcare. They are experts in managing patient health information and medical records, administering computer information systems and coding the diagnosis and procedures for healthcare services provided to patients. HIM professionals work in a multitude of settings throughout the healthcare industry including hospitals, physician offices and clinics, long-term care facilities, insurance companies, government agencies and home care providers.

Growth and Income

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of HIM professionals is expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations through 2008. On top of strong job prospects, competitive salaries also await HIM graduates. More than half of new HIM graduates with a bachelor's degree start with salaries in the \$30,000 to \$50,000 range. Five years out, many are earning \$50,000 to \$75,000. New HIM graduates with an associate's degree can earn \$20,000 to \$30,000 annually.

How to Get Started on Your HIM Career Education

You need to complete either an associate's or bachelor's degree in HIM from an accredited institution. A listing of the numerous accredited HIM programs across the country can be obtained from the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), the national association of HIM professionals, at www.ahima.org/careers/ or by calling 312-233-1100.

If you've already earned a college degree and possess the prerequisites, you can earn a postgraduate certificate or second degree in HIM. The accredited HIM program in your area can provide more details.

High school students considering a HIM career can begin a foundation with the following courses: business, computer science, English, math, biology and chemistry.

Financial aid is available to qualified students through the AHIMA Foundation of Research and Education, which offers both loans and scholarships. For more information, contact www.ahima.org/careers/scholarships.html or call the AHIMA scholarship hotline at 312-233-1128. For information on federally sponsored programs call Federal Student Financial Aid Information Center at 800-433-3243.

Certification

After completing your formal education, the next step is to successfully complete an AHIMA certification exam. A credential validates your competence as a HIM professional to employers and the public. There are two key credentials for professionals in the HIM field:

Registered Health Information Administrator (RHIA): This credential requires a bachelor's degree and successful performance on the RHIA certification exam.

Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT): A RHIT credential requires an associate's degree and successful performance on the RHIT certification exam.

Job Opportunities

HIM professionals enjoy a broad selection of job opportunities and options for professional growth. Based on skills, education and interests, some of the positions available are:

With a bachelor's degree: HIM Department Director; HIM System Manager, Data Quality Manager, Information Security Officer, HIM College Instructor, Consultant.

With an associate's degree: Health Data Analyst, Insurance Claims Analyst, Records Technician Specialist, Clinical Coding Specialist, Physician Practice Manager, Patient Information Coordinator

For more information on a HIM career contact:

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