



# Health Information Management Association of Australia

## Policies, Procedures and Standards for Accreditation of Professional Entry Education Courses for Health Information Managers

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## 1 Introduction

The Health Information Management Association of Australia (HIMAA) is the peak national professional association representing health information managers. HIMAA maintains a matrix of competencies (current *HIM Entry-Level Competencies Standards*) and seeks through a formal accreditation process to assess health information management programs against these established and recognised standards and practices. The awarding of accreditation status provides formal recognition that a reviewed course has attained the required standards.

This document outlines the processes involved to:

- Establish and maintain minimum standards for educational courses for health information managers in Australia;
- Accredite international course and curricula as requested; and
- Provide recognition for educational courses which meet or exceed the standards outlined in this document and the current *HIM Entry-Level Competencies Standards*.

### 1.1 The Health Information Management Association of Australia

The governing body of HIMAA is its Board of Directors. HIMAA provides educational, member and publication services, representing Australian HIMs at a national and international level. The strategic objectives of HIMAA include:

- I. To expand the membership base of HIMAA to include individuals who are engaged in, involved in, or affiliated with the health information management or related field.
- II. To promote our members as the universally recognised specialists in information management at all levels of the healthcare system.
- III. To ensure the Body of Knowledge currency is maintained to meet the evolving needs of the healthcare system, and utilise the HIM Knowledge Domain to differentiate the profession.
- IV. To provide relevant, current Professional Development opportunities to our members across our Knowledge Domain.
- V. To ensure HIMAA effectively communicates with our members, healthcare policy makers and more broadly with those involved in information management in healthcare.
- VI. To deliver accredited courses across the HIM knowledge domain that are flexible to meet the increasing demand for high quality education and training.
- VII. To ensure the organisation structure and function is set up to implement/attain the strategic objectives.

### 1.2 HIMAA and Education

The Constitution of HIMAA states that to be eligible to be a Full Member applicants must be graduates of a Health Information Management degree program accredited by the Association or accredited by another entity recognised by the Association [Rule 7.3 (1)]. Similarly, Student Members must be persons currently undertaking a course of study of an Approved program [Rule 7.3 (6)].

The HIMAA Board has devolved the responsibility for the accrediting of degree programs in Health Information Management to the HIMAA Education Committee and the Tertiary Education Sub-Committee. The policies procedures and standards contained in this document and the current *HIM Entry-Level Competencies Standards* have been developed by the Education Committee to accredit degree programs.

In order to obtain or retain accreditation by HIMAA a university must demonstrate that its course is consistent with sound educational policies and can produce tertiary-level graduates who are competent health information managers. It shall do this by establishing that it is being operated in accordance with the Standards set out in this document and the current *HIM Entry-Level Competencies Standards*. The above does not preclude work to undertake accreditation of international HIM courses.

## **2 Objectives of this Document**

The Policies, Procedures and Standards listed in this document and the current *HIM Entry-Level Competencies Standards* are to be used for the development and continuous evaluation of health information management educational courses in Australia, and internationally where they choose to adopt the standards. A list of the approved courses is available for the information of prospective members and students, universities, employers and the public in general.

## **3 Description of the Profession**

Health Information Management (HIM) is the study of the principles and practices of acquiring, analysing, and protecting electronic and paper-based clinical and administrative information essential to providing quality patient care.

The health information manager plans, develops, implements, evaluates and manages health information systems, including clinical and administrative data and health records in health care facilities and other types of organisations. The health information manager combines knowledge of health care processes, health records, information management, health administration, quality improvement processes, clinical classification and human resource management to provide services which meet the medical, legal, ethical and administrative requirements of the health care delivery system.

## **4 Competencies**

The competencies that are used to assess the minimum level of knowledge and skills that must be developed in graduates of health information management education courses, are outlined in the current *HIM Entry-Level Competency Standards*. This document will be revised as required, to ensure the competencies remain current.

## **5 Accreditation Policies**

Courses for health information managers will receive accreditation by meeting the *Standards for Accreditation of Educational Courses for Health Information Managers* set out under Section 7 of this document.

## **6 Accreditation Process**

The accreditation process formally assesses programs or courses against established standards for health information managers.

The accreditation process:

- Focuses on the issues in which HIMAA has an interest, and does not include issues that are exclusively the domain of the universities.
- Courses which have not previously been surveyed will usually be subject to site visits, and courses which have previously been accredited may be subject to site visits from time to time.
- Is governed by the HIMAA Education Committee, this document and the current *HIM Entry-Level Competencies Standards*, both of which may be modified from time to time.

## 6.1 Overview of Accreditation Process

The Board of HIMAA devolves governance responsibility for the accreditation of courses to the Education Committee. The role of the Board of HIMAA is to govern the work of the Education Committee and to hear any appeals regarding the decision of the Education Committee to award non or provisional accreditation status. The Education Committee in its turn delegates the accreditation review process to its Tertiary Education Sub-Committee whilst retaining the accreditation decision-making role on behalf of the HIMAA Board.

Accreditation is given for a four-year calendar period commencing in the January following the conduct of the accreditation process. Where accreditation is granted, students who complete their studies within this period will meet the requirements for full membership. Universities should request re-accreditation earlier than four years where their courses have undergone significant change.

A fee is charged for accreditation, details of which are available from HIMAA upon request.

A timeline setting out the accreditation cycle follows in section 6.6.

The individuality of universities and their special contributions are of great importance. Therefore emphasis is placed upon the evaluation of the total course, its general excellence, and the achievement of these policies.

The main steps in the process are set out below.

- A. A request to complete a Course Accreditation Survey will be submitted by the institution to the Education Committee. The Education Committee will delegate the completion of the survey to the Tertiary Education Sub-Committee.
- B. The university and the Tertiary Education Sub-Committee negotiate a schedule for the survey.
- C. The Tertiary Education Sub-Committee appoints an Accreditation Survey Team<sup>1</sup>.
- D. The university submits its documentation.
- E. The Accreditation Survey Team considers the university's documentation and liaises with the university to clarify any issues arising from the documentation.
- F. The Accreditation Survey Team conducts an on-site visit to the institution if the accreditation survey is for a new course or there has been substantial change (if the Tertiary Education Sub-Committee considers an on-site visit is appropriate).
- G. The Accreditation Survey Team compiles its draft report.
- H. The university has an opportunity to identify factual errors in the draft report.
- I. The Accreditation Survey Team provides its final report to the Tertiary Education Sub-Committee for endorsement and progression to the Education Committee.
- J. The Education Committee considers the Accreditation Survey Team's report and decides on the accreditation status of the course<sup>2</sup>.
- K. The university and HIMAA Board are advised of the Education Committee's decision.
- L. If accreditation is qualified or denied the institution has two (2) months in which to appeal the decision to the HIMAA Board.

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<sup>1</sup> Typically three (3) members of the Tertiary Education Sub-Committee including one (1) academic from another institution.

<sup>2</sup> Academic representatives on the Tertiary Education Sub-Committee are excluded from consideration of the Accreditation Survey Team report.

- M. Upon completion of the accreditation process the details and status of accredited courses are posted to/updated on the HIMAA website.

## **6.2 Guidelines for the Course Accreditation Survey**

The Course Accreditation Survey involves gathering pertinent information about the health information management course from the educational facility. The Survey includes one questionnaire and supporting documentation.

### **Questionnaires**

*I. Course Coordinator Questionnaire: see Appendix 1.*

This questionnaire seeks information about the level and administration of the health information management course, staffing and leadership, resources and fields of study included in the course. This questionnaire is to be endorsed by the course coordinator and the Head of School or equivalent. HIMAA provides a template for this questionnaire.

### **Supporting documents**

*I. HIM Competencies Matrix: see Appendix 2 for SAMPLE*

The completed matrix is used to demonstrate that the course subjects fulfil the elements of the current *HIM Entry-Level Competency Standards*. Elective/non-core subjects should be indicated as such. HIMAA provides a template for this survey.

*II. Subject / Unit outlines and course structure*

The university is asked to provide all subject/unit outlines and the course structure.

*III. List of current full-time and part-time staff involved in teaching the course and their qualifications.*

Provided by the university.

*IV. List of research outputs of staff who contributed to the course over the previous two years.*

For convenience this list may be the same as those used for current reporting within the university.

*V. Course Advisory Committee.*

The university is asked to provide a copy of the Course Advisory Committee's membership list, terms of reference and minutes since the last accreditation survey.

If there is not a functioning Course Advisory Committee the university is asked to demonstrate other methods utilised to obtain input on industry/stakeholder requirements of graduates.

### **Additional Information**

During the Accreditation process, further information may be sought such as examination papers or other assessments. During site visits this is likely to include interviews with students, staff, key stakeholders and other relevant people.

## **6.3 Guidelines for the re-accreditation survey**

There is no difference in the process for accreditation and re-accreditation.

## **6.4 Accreditation Process Outcomes**

### *Awarding Accreditation*

Accreditation is awarded when the accreditation review process confirms that the course is in substantial compliance with the policies and standards. Accreditation is for a period of four years. Graduates of courses awarded accredited status are eligible for full membership of HIMAA.

Provisional accreditation is awarded when the course has only achieved moderate compliance with the policies and standards as outlined in this document. The deficiencies are considered to be of a serious nature and impact on the educational experience provided to students. Provisional accreditation is limited to 2 years. The university will be provided with an accreditation report which details the areas of deficiency and recommendations for improvement to substantially meet the policies and standards. During the period of Provisional Accreditation courses are recognised and listed as accredited and graduates are eligible for full membership of HIMAA.

### *Denial of Accreditation*

Accreditation may not be awarded if the course is not in compliance with the policies and standards, or, if at the conclusion of the provisional time period, the review process identifies that the course has not progressed the recommendations from the survey at which provisional accreditation status was granted.

## **6.5 Appeals Process**

In order to safeguard the rights of institutions seeking recognition by HIMAA of their courses, a formal appeals procedure is available.

### *Grounds for appeal*

The only issues which may be raised by the appealing university and which may be considered by the Appeals Committee are the following:

- I. Whether the Education Committee or Accreditation Survey Panel conformed to the procedures approved by HIMAA for the conduct of the Course Accreditation process;
- II. Whether the Education Committee fully determined the facts in accordance with the criteria
- III. Whether the Education Committee correctly applied the criteria to the facts;
- IV. Whether the outcome was influenced by issues other than those included in the survey process.

The Appeals Committee will not consider:

- I. Any evidence pertaining to conditions which developed subsequent to lodgement of the completed Course Accreditation Survey by the educational institution; or
- II. Any challenge to the criteria themselves as appropriate standards by which to assess an educational course.

### *Membership of Appeals Committee*

The Appeals Committee will be formed by the HIMAA Board consisting of three HIMAA Board members who must not be current staff members of any of the universities offering health information management professional courses, the Chairperson of the Education Committee or the Lead of the Accreditation Survey Team and at least one course coordinator from an institution other than the appealing institution. Only the three HIMAA Board members have voting rights on the Appeals Committee.

### *Procedures*

Any university which is refused accreditation of a course may appeal against the decision by submitting, to the CEO of HIMAA within two months of being notified of the decision, in a written statement setting out in detail the grounds on which the appeal is based.

The university will be notified of the outcome of the appeal within two months of the appeal lodgement date.

Any university which fails to have its appeal upheld will be eligible to apply for re-survey at an early date.

### *Status of the students while an appeal is underway*

If the course was previously approved then the rights of membership will still apply to students while the appeal is being processed.

## **6.6 Timeline of events**

For Australian courses, the general timeline for the accreditation process is as follows:

- Deadline for submission of Accreditation documents - July
- Education Committee Meeting to consider accreditations and re-accreditations - August/September
- Board notified of decision – October
- University notified - November

Timelines will be negotiated upon request for:

- Australian courses where there has been extensive changes to the course or a new course of study established
- International courses

## **7 Standards For Accreditation Of Courses**

### **7.1 Level and Location of Course**

The profession's need for rigor and research require that courses be established only in universities where the infrastructure is available for excellence in teaching and research. These universities must be authorised to grant the relevant level of degree i.e. bachelor, graduate diploma or master degrees and satisfy the requirements of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, or equivalent in other countries. Undergraduate courses should be at least three years full-time or part-time equivalent. Graduate entry courses will meet the same competency requirements as undergraduate courses while taking account of the student's previous studies.

Internationally, other institutions (non-universities) may be considered for accreditation where they are considered equivalent to the Australia University sector.

### **7.2 Fields of Study**

Courses in health information management should encompass all entry-level elements of the current *HIM Entry-Level Competency Standards* in their curriculum, as a minimum requirement. Flexibility and creativity of curriculum design is possible, according to the specific educational goals of the educational institution.

In order to be considered to have met the competency standards, courses need to have covered the entry-level elements within each domain of the current *HIM Entry-Level Competency Standards*, or the prior attainment of these elements must form part of the entry criteria for the course in the case of postgraduate

education. The current *HIM Entry-Level Competency Standards* describe the status of each domain. In order for a course to be considered to have met the competency standards it is expected that a majority of the entry-level elements within each domain need to be covered within the core subjects/units.

### **7.3 Administration**

#### *7.3.1 Responsibility*

The university must assume primary responsibility for:

- financial support, curriculum planning and selection of course content
- coordination of teaching activities and learning materials/modes
- supervision of practical experience
- admission of students
- appointment of staff, and
- granting the degree or diploma documenting completion of the course.

The university will also be responsible for assuring that the activities assigned to students in the clinical setting are educational in nature and are coordinated with the course curriculum.

#### *7.3.2 Course Advisory Committee*

A Course Advisory Committee should be formed by the university and its composition, role and functions should be clearly defined. The purpose of the Committee is to advise the Course Coordinator of the development and continuing evaluation of the course. Members should be drawn from those directly affected by the course such as prospective employers, health information management practitioners, educators and students. There should be at least one representative of the local HIMAA Branch on the Committee (where this is applicable).

The Committee has no administrative authority but can help to assure the educational institution's administration that the course has the support of the profession and the health care community. Minutes of the Course Advisory Committee meetings should be maintained.

### **7.4 Staffing**

#### *7.4.1 Course Coordinator*

The course requires a Course Coordinator who holds a school or faculty appointment and who holds a degree or higher qualification in medical record administration or health information management. The individual should have a minimum of three years professional experience in health information management in a health care facility, or health care related organisation.

The Course Coordinator is responsible for the organisation, administration, curriculum development, evaluation and continued development, and general performance of the course. The Course Coordinator should have experience in research activities. Experienced researcher(s) within the School should provide leadership in research activities.

#### *7.4.2 Teaching Staff*

Approved courses should have a policy that encourages academic staff in obtaining higher degrees, continuing education and involvement in professional development activities. There should be opportunities for staff to participate in such courses.

Support should be given for staff members to undertake research activities in health information management at the international, national, state and local level.

#### **7.5 Resources**

Approved courses should have key resources available to staff and students. Some of these are explicitly listed in the Course Coordinator's Questionnaire.

**Appendix 1: SAMPLE HIMAA Course Accreditation Survey, Course Coordinator's Questionnaire**

**SAMPLE ONLY**

Name of University:

.....

Title of Health Information Management course for which accreditation is being sought:

.....

**Level and Administration of Course**

No	Assessment item	Yes	No
<i>Level and Administration</i>			
1.1	The University is authorised to grant the relevant level of degree?		
1.2	What is the full-time and part-time equivalent length of the course?: _____ If there is a time limit that part-time students have to complete the course what is the limit? _____ (years)		
1.3	Does the course have access to health care and/or relevant health care related sites (e.g. Department of Health) for student practical placements?		
<i>Staffing and Leadership</i>			
1.4	The Course Coordinator has at least three years professional experience in health information management in a health care facility, or health care related organisation.		
1.5	The Course Coordinator has qualifications in health information management or equivalent.		
1.6	The Course Coordinator has experience in research activities.		
1.7	Experienced researcher(s) within the School provide leadership in research activities.		
1.8	There are opportunities for staff to participate in continuing education and professional development activities.		
1.9	There is support available for staff members to undertake research activities and consultancy in health information management at international, national, state or local level.		
<i>Resources</i>			
1.10	The university provides access to reference material sufficient to support the requirements of the course.		
1.11	Students have access to patient records or copies of patient records, for use in subjects such as clinical classification and quality improvement.		
1.12	Students have access to adequate areas to use for private study or team project work.		

No	Assessment item	Yes	No
1.13	<p>Staff and students have access on campus to computing facilities that are sufficient to support the requirements of the course.</p> <p>What hours are these available to students? _____</p> <p>Indicate whether students have access to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MS Office products (or equivalent): Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access</li> <li>• Statistical packages (such as SPSS, SAS)</li> <li>• Epidemiological databases</li> <li>• Encoder software (such as PrimeCoder, 3M Codefinder)</li> <li>• Electronic Grouping software</li> <li>• Internet access</li> </ul>		
<i>Fields of Study</i>			
1.14	The specific objectives for each field of study within the HIM course enable the graduate to obtain the minimum percentage required, of the current <i>HIM Entry-Level Competency Standards</i> . (Requirements listed in 7.2 of the <i>HIMAA Policies and Standards for Accreditation of Educational Courses for HIMs</i> )		
1.15	There are internal programs of evaluation that ensure that the students are meeting intended outcomes.		
1.16	Practical placements concerned with policies and procedures in health information management are supervised by a suitably qualified person.		
1.17	There is evidence of subject evaluation and that the Course Advisory Committee is involved in discussions about changes to the subject that result from such evaluation activities.		
1.18	There is a university process to review the course and to assess the continuing effectiveness of the curriculum and assessment. The results of such reviews are made available to the Course Advisory Committee.		
1.19	There is a process in place to make sure that appropriate action is taken following a review.		
<i>Course Advisory Committee</i>			
1.20	<p>During the past two years, the Course Advisory Committee has considered, advised and where appropriate made recommendations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• academic policies</li> <li>• course structure and content</li> <li>• evaluation of the course</li> <li>• research activities</li> <li>• professional issues</li> <li>• liaison with professional and general community, eg marketing, course promotion.</li> <li>• continual quality improvement</li> <li>• other issues</li> </ul> <p>The Course Advisory Committee met on ____ occasions during the past two years. (<i>insert no. of meetings</i>).</p>		



Proposed developments over the next 12 - 24 months:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Course Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Course Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Head of School

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Head of School

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Appendix 2: HIMAA Course Accreditation Survey, SAMPLE HIM Competencies Matrix Format**

**SAMPLE ONLY**

Please complete the grid below by listing the health information management subject(s) that cover each entry level HIMAA Competency.

Note:

- Please highlight any subjects that are elective (that is, not all students are required to take them)
- International courses (outside of Australia) should ensure that the equivalent knowledge is understood in the context of the local context.

Domain/ Subdomain	Competency Task	Learning Level	Subject/s	Comments
<b>A. Generic professional skills</b>				
A1. Communication skills	A1.1. Demonstrate effective and appropriate written, verbal, presentation and interpersonal communication techniques	3 - Applying		
A2. Organisation & Engagement	A2.1. Demonstrate organisation and prioritisation skills to perform work or assigned tasks in an efficient, professional manner	3 - Applying		
	A2.2. Engage with professional disciplines and other relevant stakeholders to promote optimal health information practice	3 - Applying		
A3. ICT literacy and knowledge management skills	A3.1. Demonstrate competence in utilising word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, database and web applications	3 - Applying		
	A3.2. Apply the skills to use knowledge management tools (e.g. literature search) to identify relevant and current resources that can be utilised or applied in a professional setting.	3 - Applying		
A4. Teamwork	A4.1. Demonstrate the ability to work independently and participate effectively as part of a team with peers, subordinates, management and other relevant stakeholders	3 - Applying		
A5. Problem solving and decision-making	A5.1. Source, organise and summarise data and establish logical connections to analyse a problem, identify options and justify decision or course of action.	5 - Evaluating		

NB: Incomplete table for sample only – refer to actual survey document for full survey.