2026 CAHIIM ACCREDITATION STANDARDS WITH COMPLIANCE GUIDE

HIM Graduate Degree Standards

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

The Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM) is an accrediting organization which has independent authority in all actions pertaining to accreditation of educational programs in health informatics and health information management. CAHIIM is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

CAHIIM is located at 200 East Randolph Street, Suite 5100, Chicago, Illinois, 60601, and on the web at cahiim.org.

Public Interest

CAHIIM serves the public interest by operating in a consistent manner with all applicable ethical, business and accreditation best practices. Accreditation is a voluntary, self-regulatory process by which nongovernmental associations recognize educational programs found to meet or exceed standards for educational quality. Accreditation also assists in the further improvement of these educational programs as related to resources invested, processes followed, and outcomes achieved.

CAHIIM and its sponsoring organizations cooperate to establish, maintain, and promote appropriate standards of quality for postsecondary educational programs in health informatics and health information management, providing competent, skilled professionals to the healthcare industry.

CAHIIM Mission

Provide innovative leadership that drives enhanced workforce competence by ensuring educational excellence.

CAHIIM Vision

A new era in innovation and educational excellence that supports public trust and workforce competence.

Standard 1: Sponsoring Educational Institution

The sponsoring educational institution must be a postsecondary academic institution accredited by an institutional accrediting organization that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). The institution is authorized to award a graduate level degree.

Compliance Guide

Supporting Documents Needed for Compliance with this Standard:
- *Upload the most recent institutional accreditation award letter.*

Please be aware that CAHIIM does not support system accreditation. CAHIIM is a programmatic accreditor. Each HIM program (campus based or online) is recognized as a unique campus, and each program must seek accreditation independently.

One example of a system is one that is run by the state. In a state system all colleges within a state contribute partial courses to a single online presence. The online presence does not have a dedicated HIM program director or staff. In this instance, North Forty contributes three classes to the state online system, Southwest contributes two classes to the state online system, and Central contributes four classes to the state online system.

Another example of a system is of a multi-campus system where multiple campus of a single university contribute partial courses to a single online presence. The online presence does not have a dedicated HIM program director or staff.

In these system cases, each HIM program located at a campus must seek CAHIIM accreditation independently of the system's online presence. Each program will be judged by its own merits and whether all standards are met. Only HIM graduates from CAHIIM accredited programs are qualified to sit for the AHIMA credential exam.

Standard 2: Graduate Program Structure

The health information management graduate program must be established as a core curriculum within a graduate level program of study and culminates with a master's degree.

Compliance Guide

Supporting Documents Needed for Compliance with this Standard:
- *Direct reference to Program Curriculum in Course Catalog*

Evidence that the program is not a certificate program.

Standard 3: Governance Structure

The sponsoring educational institution must demonstrate clear lines of authority and administrative governance of the program within the framework of the sponsoring institution.

Compliance Guide

If you participate in a system school, please refer to the interpretation in Standard 1: Sponsoring Educational Institution.

Supporting Documents Needed to Demonstrate Compliance with Standard:
- *Institutional Organization Chart*
- *Organizational Chart for the program*

A detailed organization chart for the program should start with the institutional president and end with program director, faculty, adjunct faculty and support staff for the HIM program, showing lines of authority along with staff names and position titles.

Standard 4: Program Mission

The program's mission must form the basis for program planning, implementation, and be compatible with the mission of the sponsoring educational institution and ethics of the health information management profession.

Compliance Guide

Supporting Documents Needed for Compliance with this standard:
- *Upload and Identify location of Program Mission*
- *Upload and Identify location of Institutional Mission*

Each program will define its own mission and goals which derive from the purposes of its sponsoring educational institution, communities of interest, workforce needs, faculty expertise, and the values of the field of health information management. The program's mission and vision should be complimentary to the institution's mission and vision.

Standard 5: Program Effectiveness Measures

The program's goals must state target outcomes to be achieved, be measurable, and align within the mission of the sponsoring educational institution.

Compliance Guide

Supporting Documents Needed to Demonstrate Compliance:
- *Program Effectiveness Plan (PEP)*

A curriculum goal is required for the program to submit for evaluation. The program must also include a minimum of two other goals.

Program goals may include, but not limited to the following:
- *Faculty Goals*
- *Student Goals*
- *Graduate Goals*
- *Advisory Committee Goals*
- *Or any additional program goals, as related to program effectiveness*

Standard 6: Program Assessment Process

The program's ongoing assessment process must be systematic and evaluate the alignment with the missions and goals of the program.

Compliance Guide

This standard is looking for the continuous process of the evaluation of the program mission, program goals, curriculum competencies, and program's overall quality.

Provide a narrative on the program's process of systematic assessment and evaluation.

Annual HIM program planning may include, but not be limited to one or more of the following:
- *Describing how the program responds to Institutional Effectiveness requirements*
- *Outlining how the program will implement these changes.*
- *Reviewing and reflecting on program goals in conjunction with the advisory committee*

Standard 7: Program Assessment Outcomes

Results of the program's ongoing assessment must be monitored and reflected in an action plan and reviewed by the program's advisory board and others as appropriate to document program modifications.

Compliance Guide

Provide a narrative regarding the program's action plan in relation to the systematic assessment and evaluation.

The action plan may include, but not be limited to one or more of the following:
- *Suggested program improvements*
- *Curriculum revisions*
- *Improvement of student services*
- *Activities for faculty development*
- *Technology improvements*

Standard 8: Curriculum

The program must develop and maintain competency-based curriculum to ensure the program addresses and administers assessments of the competencies at the required Miller's Pyramid level.

Compliance Guide

Supporting Documents Needed to Demonstrate Compliance Standard:
- *Competency Based Curriculum Map*
- *Competency Based Assessment Template*

Standard 9: Course Sequence

Program content must be delivered in an appropriate sequence of didactic, laboratory, and professional practice activities. Course content must be logical and coherent with didactic instruction and related activities organized in each course. Prerequisite courses must be identified and properly sequenced in the curriculum.

Compliance Guide

Supporting Documents Needed to Demonstrate Compliance with Standard:
- *CAHIIM Course Sequence Document*

Standard 10: Interprofessional Education

The program must demonstrate how students engage in interprofessional education to learn with, from, and about students from at least one other professional discipline.

Compliance Guide

Examples of IPE are, but not limited to:
- *One or more units/modules within a course*
- *IPE project/assignment*
- *Consortium meeting with different disciplines*
- *Experiences with the program's student organization*
- *A course designed for IPE*
- *Institutional interprofessional experiences*
- *Supervised learning experience with students from another profession*

Standard 11: Syllabi

Syllabi must follow a standardized format for the program.

The following items must be included within the syllabi:
- Course Number & Title
- Co or Pre-requisites
- Instructor contact information
- Details regarding text/lab required purchases
- The competencies related to each course
- Course Objectives or Learning Outcomes
- Course Schedule
- Assessment Methods

Compliance Guide

Supporting Documents Needed to Demonstrate Compliance with Standard:
- *All HIM Course Specific Syllabi*
- *A copy of the foundational course syllabi*

competencies: Please title the competencies as the Required Course Competencies
- *Or as an addendum attach Competency Based Map that identifies the competencies for each particular course.*

Course Objectives or Learning Outcomes: The program may use the Performance Indicators to identify the course specific objectives or learning outcomes.

Course Schedule:
- *Identify week/unit/chapter/module*
- *Assignments, projects, tests, quizzes for each week/unit/chapter/module*
- *Due dates*

Assessment Methods:

- *Weights or point proportion of final grade determined by each assessment type*
- *Course grading scale or schema*

Standard 12: Curriculum – Assessment of Students

Student assessment methods must be varied to provide both student and program faculty with valid indications of the student's progress toward, and demonstration of the competencies at the defined Miller's Pyramid level.

Compliance Guide

Supporting Documents Needed to Demonstrate Compliance with Standard:
- *Competency Assessment Template*

The program must demonstrate a process to track student achievement of competence through formative and summative assessment.

Formative assessments could include, but are not limited to:
- *Quizzes*
- *Experiential Learning feedback with coaching*
- *Forum discussion posts*
- *Research manuscript or paper outline*
- *Simulation debrief*

Summative assessments could include, but are not limited to:
- *Final exam and/or mid-term exam*
- *Written case study based on a body of course work.*
- *Projects*
- *Evaluation from an experiential learning supervisor, if applicable*
- *Final research paper*
- *Coding audit report*
- *A prepared budget*

Standard 13: Online Content Access

Academic technologies, software applications and simulations, and online or web-enhanced courses have a significant role in the learning environment. To fairly evaluate online content, the program must provide CAHIIM with full access to the Learning Management Systems (LMS) in use for all HIM course content and relevant education applications used to deliver that content.

Compliance Guide

College accreditors are exceptions to the FERPA access rules. All accreditors are being tasked with increased vigilance in student/teacher interactions. The only method to ascertain the level of engagement by accreditors is to review the latest version of each HIM course. This is accomplished by granting CAHIIM access to the LMS.

The IT department should create a profile for CAHIIM and grant this profile "observer status" or "guest view." This limits access of the peer reviewer to observing interactions only and there is no chance of impacting a course's notes, content, or grades.

LMS Access by CAHIIM: Generic sign-on/passwords allowing CAHIIM login access to the LMS for all courses in the program are required. Because access to the LMS occurs at multiple points in time throughout the accreditation process (staff review, pre-site visit review, post-site visit review, and Board review), it is imperative that the CAHIIM sign-on/passwords be generic in order to avoid the delays caused by multiple individual logins. Generic sign-on/passwords, like the example below, are suggested:
- *Sign-on > CAHIIM*
- *Password > CAHIIM2018*

Once set up, this sign-on/password should remain active until the program receives their official CAHIIM Accreditation decision letter.

Standard 14: Faculty

The program must clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the faculty necessary to fully support and sustain the program.

Compliance Guide

Supporting Documents Needed to Demonstrate Compliance with Standard:
- *CAHIIM Faculty Table*
- *Policy/procedure for staffing a course based on class size*
  - *Threshold for teaching assistant*

If available, job descriptions for full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty

Standard 15: Professional Development

Program Director and HIM faculty, including adjunct instructors, must demonstrate continued professional development related to competency-based education, teaching pedagogy, curriculum content in assigned teaching areas, advancements in technology, and, if applicable, online teaching and learning methods.

Program Director must also provide evidence of professional development in program management.

Compliance Guide

Some practical examples of professional development activities include, but not limited to:
- *Attend workshops, conferences, and/or town halls hosted by, but not limited to:*
  - *CAHIIM*
  - *AHIMA*
  - *Institutions of Higher Learning*
  - *Other Professional Associations/Organizations*
- *Earning a new professional credentials/recognition, but not limited to: (i.e. PM certificate for project management)*
  - *CAHIIM Faculty Fellowship*
  - *Badges*
  - *Microcredentials*
- *Complete courses towards a certificate or a degree program.*
- *Complete, or create courses on pedagogy areas such as: curriculum and assessment development, distance/online education, instructional design, etc.*
  - *Leadership, program management, budget management, etc.*

Standard 16: Program Director

The program shall clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the program director necessary to fully support and sustain the program. The program director must have a RHIA credential and must have a minimum of a master's degree. A doctoral degree is preferred.

Compliance Guide

Supporting Documents Needed to Demonstrate Compliance:
- *Upload current CV for program director that reflects the credential held and educational level obtained.*
- *Upload most current RHIA/RHIT certificate provided by AHIMA.*
- *Program director job description*

Standard 17: Faculty Qualifications

The qualifications of each faculty member must include competence in assigned teaching areas.

Compliance Guide

Supporting Documents Needed to Demonstrate Compliance:
- *CVs of all the faculty*
- *If available, institutional policies that govern faculty qualifications for graduate programs*

Standard 18: Faculty Evaluation

Each faculty member's performance must be evaluated according to the institution's policies.

Compliance Guide

Supporting Documents Needed to Demonstrate Compliance with Standard:
- *Append the institutional requirements and process for periodic faculty evaluation.*
- *Append the performance evaluation tool(s) used.*

All programs must have some documented method of measuring faculty effectiveness. Program should describe the effectiveness of their faculty and impact of faculty evaluations on the program.

Evaluation is typically done by at least one, or more, of the following:
- *Program Director*
- *Other faculty members*
- *Students*
- *Others (dean, department chair, etc.)*
- *Self*
- *Peer Committees*

Standard 19: Learning Resources

The program must provide students access to learning resources to support their educational experience in a competency-based education model to achieve student competence.

Learning resources and technical support services must be identified and available to meet student needs.

Compliance Guide

The program must ensure that technology requirements and skills are made known to students before courses begin.

Supporting Documents Needed to Demonstrate Compliance with Standard:
- *Inventory of all student resources available*
- *Identify all technical support hours for each identified resource, including LMS support*

All programs must facilitate student access and use of the software needed for students to apply the competencies and demonstrate competence. Examples include, but not limited to:
- *Software Tools*
- *Simulated EHRs*
- *Data Visualization*
- *Encoders*
- *Student Engagement Software*
- *Statistical software*

Standard 20: Financial Resources

Demonstrate ongoing financial support for the program to achieve the program's goals and outcomes.

Compliance Guide

Supporting Documents Needed to Demonstrate Compliance with Standard:
- *CAHIIM Budget Template*
- *Description of program budget setting process*
- *Identify program director's role in budget process and requesting funds, as needed*

Standard 21: Advisory Committee

An advisory committee, which is representative of the communities of interest, must be designated and charged with the responsibility of meeting at least annually to evaluate the program needs, curriculum, and goals.

Compliance Guide

Supporting Documents Needed to Demonstrate Compliance with Standard:
- *Upload the two most recent Advisory Committee Meeting minutes that reflect that the advisory board is supporting the program in the development and revision of program goals and curriculum, monitoring program needs and expectations, and ensuring program responsiveness to change.*
- *A directory of advisory committee members, including name, job title and credential/license*

Active Role: The committee members should be providing professional insights into your course content. This is a valuable contribution to making your program responsive to the needs of the community. Some examples of projects or tasks that advisory committees do in other programs include:

- *Review curriculum*
- *Guest speakers into courses*
- *Environmental scans*
- *Assist with grant proposal writing*
- *Mentoring of students*
- *Creating course assignments and sharing practice documents/policies*
- *Program evaluation*

Suggestion: The advisory committee should represent the HIM profession, and the community of interest.

Standard 22: Student Academic Progression

The program must have a process to manage and monitor student progression: admission, advisement, counseling, and including tracking grades, credits, and attainment of the competencies.

Compliance Guide

CAHIIM will verify that the institution has adequate procedures in place to capture and store student records. Institutions must maintain student records that reflect evidence of student evaluation and progression toward achievement of program requirements. The focus during the site visit will be to review how the program manages and monitors student progression.

Standard 23: Accurate Published Information

Program information must accurately reflect the program offered and must be published and accessible to all applicants and enrolled students. Specific content required is outlined in the CAHIIM Accreditation Manual.

Compliance Guide

Refer to the CAHIIM Accreditation Manual, section Public Disclosures, to identify all supporting documents that need to be uploaded to this standard for compliance.

Standard 24: Lawful, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Practices

All activities associated with the program, including student and faculty recruitment, student admission, and faculty employment practices, must demonstrate a culture of lawful and DEI practices in accordance with any federal, state and university statutes, rules, and regulations.

Compliance Guide

Supporting Documents Needed to Demonstrate Compliance with Standard
- Append a copy of the non-discrimination policies of the institution