

Professional Certificate Approval Program – Self Study Template

This document is intended to serve as a guide to institutions preparing documentation for submission as part of the PCAP application and self study submission process. DO NOT USE THIS FILE TO SUBMIT YOUR MATERIALS. You will submit your materials using the online application system, but by reviewing this document you will be aware of the required information and file uploads prior to initiating the application and self study process in the online application system.

I. Institution Response

This is the narrative preview of the application. In this section, include any information you feel is important but not included elsewhere in the self study document.

II. Application for Approval

Print out the form available on the following page. Complete, sign, and scan for submission with all self -study documents.

Professional Certificate Approval Process (PCAP)

Instructions for completion: Print out this form, complete, sign and scan for submission with all self-study documents.

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL

The Professional Certificate Approval Process is initiated or continued at the request of the institution sponsoring a certificate program. This application, signed by the chief executive officer and program officials constitutes the formal request for approval.

1. On behalf of the _____ (the "Institution") and _____ (the "Program"), the undersigned hereby apply to the Professional Certificate Approval Process ("the PCAP") for approval of the Program in accordance with and subject to the procedures and regulations of the PCAP. The undersigned have read and agree to the conditions set forth in the PCAP's Manual and other policy documents describing the requirements for approval and the approval process. The undersigned understand and agree that the Program will be subject to denial of approval; to withdrawal of approval and forfeiture and redelivery of any status of public recognition indicating approval granted by the PCAP; and to denial of future eligibility for approval in the event that any of the statements or answers made in this application are false or in the event that the Program violates any of the rules or regulations governing approved programs.

2. The undersigned hereby authorize the PCAP to make whatever inquiries and investigations it deems necessary to verify the contents of this application. The undersigned understand that this application and any information or material received or generated by the PCAP in connection with the approval process will be kept confidential and will not be released unless the Program has authorized such release or such release is required by law; provided, however, that:

- (a) The fact that the Program is or is not, or has or has not been, approved is treated as a matter of public record and may be disclosed;
- (b) All records pertaining to the Program may be made available to its institutional accrediting agency, the state education agency, the U.S. Department of Education, and other federal or state agencies, as deemed appropriate by the PCAP; and
- (c) The PCAP may use other information from this application for the purpose of statistical analysis, provided that the Program's identification with that information has been deleted.

3. The undersigned hereby agree to hold the PCAP, its Commission, Approval Council, program reviewers, employees, and agents harmless from any and all actions, suits, obligations, complaints, claims, or damages including, but not limited to, reasonable attorneys' fees, arising out of any action or omission by any of them in connection with

this application, the application process, or the denial or withdrawal of the Program's approval or eligibility for approval.

4. Notwithstanding the above, should the Institution or the Program file suit against PCAP, the undersigned hereby agree that any such action shall be governed by and construed under the laws of the State of Illinois without regard to conflicts of law. The undersigned further agree that any such action shall be brought in the Circuit Court of Cook County in the State of Illinois, or the Federal District Court for the Northern District of Illinois; consents to the jurisdiction of such state and federal courts; and agrees that the venue of such courts is proper. The undersigned further agree that, should the Institution or the Program not prevail in any such action, PCAP shall be entitled to all costs, including reasonable attorneys' fees, incurred in connection with the litigation.

THE UNDERSIGNED UNDERSTAND AND AGREE THAT THE DECISION AS TO WHETHER THE PROGRAM QUALIFIES FOR APPROVAL RESTS SOLELY AND EXCLUSIVELY WITH THE PCAP AND THAT THE DECISION(S) OF THE PCAP ARE FINAL.

THE UNDERSIGNED HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO THIS AGREEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE PROGRAM AND THE INSTITUTION, AS INDICATED BELOW.

THE UNDERSIGNED HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE STATEMENTS AND INTEND FOR THE PROGRAM AND INSTITUTION TO BE LEGALLY BOUND BY THEM.

PROGRAM: _____

BY: _____
Name Title

Signature Date

INSTITUTION: _____

BY: _____
Name Title

Signature Date

III. Standard: Administration

Complete each section of this document entirely. The entirety of the Self Study document will be returned as “not reviewed” should all answers not be complete upon submission.

Field Title	Instructions
Sponsoring Institution Name	<i>Provide name of Sponsoring Institution (required)</i>
Mailing Address	<i>Provide mailing address (required)</i>
Mailing Address (line 2)	<i>Provide additional mailing address information if needed</i>
City	<i>Provide city (required)</i>
State	<i>Provide state (required)</i>
Zip Code	<i>Provide zip code (required)</i>
CAHIIM Identification Number (if institution is CAHIIM-accredited)	<i>Provide CAHIIM Identification Number (if CAHIIM-accredited)</i>
Website URL	<i>Provide program website URL if available</i>
Name of Regional or National Accrediting Organization	<i>Provide name of regional or national accrediting organization if available</i>
Current Accreditation is valid through	<i>Provide date through which current accreditation is valid if available</i>
Dean or Comparable Officer – Name	<i>Provide name of dean or comparable officer (required)</i>
Dean or Comparable Officer – Phone	<i>Provide phone number of dean or comparable officer (required)</i>
Dean or Comparable Officer – Email	<i>Provide email address of dean or comparable officer (required)</i>
Program Director/Coordinator – Name	<i>Provide name of program director/coordinator (required)</i>
Program Director/Coordinator – Credentials	<i>Provide credentials of program director/coordinator (required)</i>
Program Director/Coordinator – Phone	<i>Provide phone number of program director/coordinator (required)</i>
Program Director/Coordinator – Email	<i>Provide email address of program director/coordinator (required)</i>
Course support staff (faculty, course developers, graders, lecturers, etc.) - Names and Credentials	<i>Provide a list of the names and credentials of all course support staff (required)</i>
Number of students currently enrolled	<i>Provide the number of students currently enrolled in the course (required)</i>
Date program opened to accept students	<i>Provide the date when the program opened to accept students (required)</i>

IV. Standard: Advisory Body

Standard:

The program must have an advisory body representative of its communities of interest. The advisory body must meet at least annually. The body is responsible for assisting the program and Institution with developing and revising the program goals and curriculum and ensuring program responsiveness to changes in the industry.

Files to be attached:

- A list of advisory body members: name/credentials/title/organization/tenure on advisory body (required)
- Advisory body meeting agendas for the past calendar year (required)
- Advisory body meeting minutes for the past calendar year (required)

Evidence:

In a paragraph (or more) comment on the makeup of advisory body (committee, board, etc.), how frequently they meet, how feedback from the body is realized as improvements in program, and how the body is made aware of program metrics.

V. Standard: Fair Practices

Standard:

The PCAP expects the program and sponsoring institution to promote Fair Standards by clear and transparent communications with students and other interested parties.

Submission:

Provide a URL to a catalog or other online source to each of the following policies and specifically identify below what section of the catalog applies to each question. Alternately you may attach an electronic (scanned) copy if the documentation is provided to students in paper format.

1. What is the program admission policy?
2. What records are maintained for student enrollment and evaluation in sufficient detail to document learning progress and achievement? (While no policy is required for this, please describe in detail what kinds of student records are kept, the format, and the maintenance schedule for this kind of documentation).
3. How are student/faculty/instructor grievances handled in a consistent process according to an established protocol, and how are they communicated to affected parties?
4. What is the process for student withdrawal and refunds of tuition/fees?
5. What are the non-discriminatory practices with respect to race, color, creed, sex, age, disabling conditions (handicaps), and national origin that are practiced in the institution?

Evidence:

Comment how the institution ensures that appropriate systems/policies are in place and how students are made aware of these practices.

VI. Standard: Advertising

Standard:

Published program information must accurately reflect the program offered and must be known to all applicants and students.

Evidence:

Announcements and promotions must accurately reflect the program being offered. The institution must clearly indicate the intended competencies and outcome of the coding program and identify it as a certificate (non-degree) program.

In this section of the template, explain how you promote the program, and if you make it clear that this is a coding certificate program. If you wish to support your response, please include a link to where this information appears on your website (if appropriate).

VII. Standard: Program Resources

Standard:

The sponsoring institution must provide appropriate resources to support the program and its students.

Files to be attached:

- A budget summary for the program for the previous and current year (for institutions in operation for less than one year, only the current year budget summary is required)

Evidence:

In this section of the template, identify and discuss the nature of resources available to students such as: encoders, coding labs, number and types of complete paper and electronic medical records and how these are accessed by students, etc.

Document the financial support and institutional resources of the coding program. Are these resources similar to other certificate or similar programs in the institution?

VIII. Standard: Program Director (Coordinator), Faculty, and Course Support Staff

Standard:

Faculty and course support staff (instructors, content designers, graders, lecturers, etc.) must provide students with adequate attention, instruction and supervised practice to acquire the knowledge and competence needed by entry-level coding professionals.

The Coding Program Director (Coordinator), faculty and support course staff for the HIM professional course content must possess an AHIMA recognized credential: RHIA, RHIT, CCS, or CCS-P. Health sciences faculty need not be AHIMA credentialed.

The Coding Program Director (Coordinator), faculty, and course support staff must demonstrate current knowledge in course content through appropriate professional development activities.

Files to be attached:

- A document that describes all of the professional development activities completed in the past calendar year by the coding program director, HIM professional faculty, and all course support staff.
- A document with the CVs of the Program Director, all faculty (including health sciences faculty) and all course support staff. (All CVs should be copied and pasted into a single document for upload)

Evidence:

- Comment how sufficient instructional staff are provided to assure that students receive adequate attention, instruction and feedback to acquire the knowledge and competence needed for entry level coding practice.
- Provide teaching ratios for all courses in the coding curriculum.
- Compare the teaching ratios for this certificate program to other similar programs that the college sponsors – are they similar or different?
- Explain whether this is an online, campus based, or hybrid program. If hybrid, describe how many hours the students are required to be on campus.

IX. Standard: Curriculum Plan & Methodology

Standard:

The program must demonstrate that the curriculum meets or exceeds the course content as required by the Model Coding Curriculum Checklist (available on page 9 of this document).

Instruction must be delivered in an appropriate sequence of didactic, laboratory, and professional practice activities.

The curriculum must include the coding model curriculum knowledge clusters and demonstrate how the appropriate knowledge base is obtained.

Instruction must be based on clearly written course syllabi describing entry-level competencies, course objectives, and evaluation methods.

Files to be attached:

- A document showing the sequencing of courses in the curriculum (include pre-requisite and co-requisite requirements)
- Completed Model Curriculum Checklist (available on page 9 of this document)

Evidence:

- Comment on how the curriculum was designed and discuss how course work is sequenced – prerequisites, building on foundation knowledge.

- Explain how the program ensures that clearly written course materials (syllabi) are provided to the student. Describe how materials clearly identify course learning objectives and supervised professional practice assignments to be achieved, the frequency of testing and other documented student evaluation and the competencies required for completion
- Explain how testing methods (evaluation systems) are used in the program and how the program ensures that the model coding curriculum knowledge clusters and competencies are achieved.
- Describe frequency of testing, type of tests used, average turn-around time for returning tests and providing students feedback on their progress.
- Describe what mechanisms are used to ensure that the testing done is a reliable indicator of the effectiveness of course design and instruction
- Explain how appropriate course content is reinforced by structured practice experiences (skill labs and exercises) to apply learned principles.

X. Standard: Curriculum Content: Life Sciences

Standard:

Refer to PCAP Manual for Life Science Curriculum Requirements in the Model Coding Curriculum (hours, content, knowledge clusters).

Files to be attached:

FOR EACH REQUIRED LIFE SCIENCES CLASS (Anatomy and Physiology, Medical Terminology, and Pathopharmacology):

- One (1) example of an exam for each Anatomy and Physiology course. Combine all examples into a single file before uploading.
- One (1) example of an exam for each Medical Terminology course. Combine all examples into a single file before uploading.
- One (1) example of an exam for each Pathopharmacology course. Combine all examples into a single file before uploading.
- Detailed syllabus for EACH LIFE SCIENCES CLASS (A&P, MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY, PATHOPHARMACOLOGY) – Each Syllabi must include faculty and support staff names, credentials and contact information, office hours, weekly class schedule, topics to be covered, reading assignments, and listing of labs or homework assignments to be completed.

Evidence:

Comment on how the program satisfies the content and hours requirement for each component of the Life Sciences Knowledge Clusters.

Model Coding Curriculum Checklist

Approved Coding Certificate Programs must be based on content appropriate to prepare students to perform the role and functions associated with clinical coders in healthcare settings. The Knowledge Clusters and Job Competencies which make up the expected body of knowledge for a beginning coder with a CCA credential are required elements of approved coding programs.

Indicate the courses in which the Knowledge Clusters & Competencies are covered - coverage in multiple courses is common and expected.

List Course Numbers:										
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LIFE SCIENCES CONTENT

Anatomy and Physiology

Study of the structure and function of the human body – full body systems										
Emphasis on anatomical orientation										
Anatomical online lookup (Adam, etc.)										
Anatomical plate work										

Medical Terminology

Spell, define, and pronounce (through supplemental CD tools), medical terms as well as understanding the concepts of root/suffix/prefix word builds										
Common medical terms of major disease processes, diagnostic procedures, laboratory tests, abbreviations, drugs, and treatment modalities										

Pathopharmacology

Specific disease processes										
By human body system										
For each disease, identify: Cause, diagnosis, and treatment										
Study of disease causes										

List Course Numbers:										
Study of drug action – absorption, distribution, metabolism, excretion										
Drug classifications										
Most commonly prescribed drugs										
What is a formulary										
Matching drugs to common conditions										
Matching drugs to lab findings										
CLINICAL CODING CONTENT										
<i>ICD Coding Part 1</i>										
Hands on encoder use										
Automated code book software systems										
Natural Language processing coding systems										
Principles and application of coding systems (International Classification of Diseases ICD-9-CM and ICD-10-CM)										
Diagnostic groupings										
Classifications, taxonomies, nomenclatures, terminologies, and clinical vocabularies such as SNOMED-CT										
Review/discuss other diagnosis coding systems or code sets including: DSM-IV, ICD-O										
Use of official coding guidelines and reporting requirements										

List Course Numbers:										
<i>CPT Coding Part 1</i>										
Principles and application of coding systems (ICD-9-CM Volume III and ICD-10-PCS, CPT 4, HCPCS)										
Procedural groupings (APC, RUGs)										
Review/discuss other procedure coding systems										
<i>ICD Coding Part 2</i>										
Case mix analysis										
Severity of illness systems										
Coding compliance strategies, auditing, and reporting (such as CCI, plans)										
Coding quality monitors reporting										
Case studies using more complex code assignments with ICD-9-CM and ICD-10-CM. Include PPS application examples for ICD coding (DRG, RUGS, HHRG, etc.)										
Compare and contrast ICD-9-CM and ICD-10-CM code assignments and conventions										
Introduction to Systematized Nomenclature of Medicine (SNOMED) – Includes a brief overview of its role in the healthcare delivery system as the basis for an electronic health record – outline its relationship to the administrative code sets currently used for billing and statistical reporting										
Authentic coding										

List Course Numbers:										
<i>CPT Coding Part 2</i>										
Principles and application of coding systems (ICD-9-CM Volume III and ICD-10-PCS, CPT 4, HCPCS)										
Procedural groupings (APC, RUGs)										
RBRVS, APCs, ASC examples used including professional fee billing examples in coding (Evaluation and Management services, surgical services, etc.)										
Case studies and more complex code assignments using CPT and HCPCS Level II codes										
REIMBURSEMENT CONTENT										
Commercial, managed care, and federal insurance plans										
Compliance strategies and reporting										
Payment methodologies and systems (such as capitation, prospective payment systems, RBRVS)										
Billing processes and procedures (such as claims, EOB, ABN, electronic data interchange)										
Chargemaster maintenance										
Regulatory guidelines										
Reimbursement monitoring and reporting										

List Course Numbers:											
HEALTH INFORMATION AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS CONTENT											
Structure and use of health information											
Health record data collection tools											
Data sources											
Healthcare data sets											
Health record documentation											
Data quality and integrity											
Healthcare organizations structure and operation											
External standards, regulations, and initiatives											
Healthcare providers and disciplines											
Computer concepts											
Communication and internet technologies											
Health information systems											
Health information specialty systems (coding)											
Document archival, retrieval, and imaging systems											
Data retrieval and maintenance											
Data security concepts											
Data integrity and security processes and monitoring											
LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE CONTENT											
Legislative and regulatory											
Health information/record laws and regulations (such as retention, patient rights/advocacy, advanced directives, privacy)											

List Course Numbers:										
Confidentiality, privacy, and security policies, procedures and monitoring										
Ethical issues										
Job Competencies										
Job Competencies are the functions new coders should be able to perform upon hire. In the table below, check off in which courses the competencies are covered, coverage in multiple courses is common and expected.										
Assign correct ambulatory payment classification (APC)										
Interpret healthcare data for code assignment										
Incorporate clinical vocabularies and terminologies used in health information systems										
Abstract pertinent information from medical records										
Consult reference materials to facilitate code assignment										
Apply inpatient coding guidelines										
Apply outpatient coding guidelines										
Apply physician coding guidelines										
Assign inpatient codes										
Assign outpatient codes										
Assign physician codes										
Assign correct diagnosis related group (DRG)										
Evaluate NCCI (National Correct Coding Initiative) edits										
Reconcile NCCI edits										

List Course Numbers:										
Validate medical necessity using LCD (local coverage determinations) and NCD national coverage determinations										
Submit claim forms										
Communicate with financial departments										
Evaluate claim denials										
Respond to claim denials										
Re-submit denied claim to the payer source										
Communicate with the physician to clarify documentation										
Retrieve medical records										
Analyze medical records qualitatively for deficiencies										
Perform data abstraction										
Request patient-specific documentation from other sources (for example, ancillary departments, physician's office, etc.)										
Retrieve patient information from master patient index										
Educate providers in regards to health data standards										
Perform ethical coding										
Clarify documentation through physician query										
Research latest coding changes										
Implement latest coding changes										
Update fee/charge ticket based on latest coding changes										
Educate providers on compliant coding										

List Course Numbers:										
Assist in preparing the organization for external audits										
Utilize practice management and HIM (Health Information Management) systems										
Utilize CAC (computer assisted coding) software that automatically assigns codes based on electronic text										
Validate the codes assigned by computer assisted coding software										
Ensure patient confidentiality										
Educate healthcare staff on privacy and confidentiality issues										
Recognize and report privacy issues/violations										
Maintain a secure work environment										
Utilize pass codes										
Access only minimal necessary documents/information										
Release patient-specific data to authorized individuals										
Protect electronic documents through encryption										
Transfer electronic documents through secure sites										
Retain confidential records appropriately										
Destroy confidential records appropriately										

XI. Standard: Curriculum Content – Clinical Coding and Classification (Diagnostic & Procedural)

Standard:

Refer to PCAP Manual for Clinical Coding and Classification (Diagnostic & Procedural) Curriculum Requirements in the Model Coding Curriculum (hours, content, knowledge clusters).

Files to be attached

FOR EACH CODING AND CLASSIFICATION COURSE:

- Two (2) examples of skill practice labs for each coding class offered. Combine all examples into a single file before uploading and label each example with the course number and assignment title.
- One (1) example exam for each coding class offered. Combine all examples into a single file before uploading and label each example with the course number and assignment title.
- Detailed syllabus for each coding class offered. Syllabi must include faculty and support staff names, credentials and contact information, office hours, weekly class schedule, topics to be covered, reading assignments, and listing of labs or homework assignments to be completed. All coding course syllabi are to be copied and pasted into a single file, with each individual syllabus clearly identifying the specific course information.

Evidence:

- Comment on how the program satisfies the content and hours requirement for each component of the Clinical Coding and Classification Knowledge Clusters, and explain how the program integrates an electronic encoder – what type, what components are in the software package, how many labs or exercises make use of the encoder, and how students compare and contrast other encoders to the one used in the program.
- Comment on the institutional conversion plan and timeline for ICD-10 (CM and PCS). Specifically discuss how faculty are being prepared to teach ICD-10 (CM and PCS). Also specifically include discussion on the method for conversion (i.e., phasing out/in of ICD-9 and 10, during what time period will both be taught, etc)

XII. Standard: Curriculum Content – Reimbursement Methodologies

Standard:

Refer to PCAP Manual for Reimbursement Methodologies Curriculum Requirements in the Model Coding Curriculum (hours, content, knowledge clusters).

Files to be attached:

- Examples of two (2) assignments
- One (1) example exam
- Detailed syllabus – Syllabi must include faculty and support staff names, credentials and contact information, office hours, weekly class schedule, topics to be covered, reading assignments, and listing of labs or homework assignments to be completed.

Evidence:

Comment on how the program satisfies the content and hours requirement for each Reimbursement Knowledge Cluster.

XIII. Standard: Curriculum Content - Health Information and Delivery Systems

Standard:

Refer to PCAP Manual for the Health Information and Delivery Systems Curriculum Requirements in the Model Coding Curriculum (hours, content, knowledge clusters).

Files to be attached:

- Examples of two assignments
- One example exam
- Detailed syllabus – Syllabi must include faculty and support staff names, credentials and contact information, office hours, weekly class schedule, topics to be covered, reading assignments, and listing of labs or homework assignments to be completed.

Evidence:

Comment on how the program satisfies the content and hours requirement for each Health Information and Delivery Systems.

XIV. Standard: Curriculum Content – Legal and Compliance

Standard:

Refer to PCAP Manual for Legal and Compliance requirements in the Model Coding Curriculum (hours, content, knowledge clusters).

Files to be attached:

- Two (2) examples of assignments
- One (1) example exam
- Detailed syllabus – Syllabi must include faculty and support staff names, credentials and contact information, office hours, weekly class schedule, topics to be covered, reading assignments, and listing of labs or homework assignments to be completed.

Evidence:

Comment on how the program satisfies the content and hours requirement for each Legal and Compliance Knowledge Cluster.

XV. Standard: Curriculum Content: Professional Practice Experience (PPE)

Standard:

Refer to PCAP Manual for PPE Requirements in the Model Coding Curriculum (hours, content, knowledge clusters).

Files to be attached:

- Detailed syllabus – Syllabi must include faculty and support staff names, credentials and contact information, office hours, weekly class schedule, topics to be covered, reading assignments, and listing of labs or homework assignments to be completed.
- A list of affiliation sites used

Evidence:

Comment on the nature of PPE in your program. Include hours, and how students acquire field-based skills. If using a virtual PPE, explain how the program re-creates genuine coding experiences in a virtual/lab environment. Specifically speak about the Authentic Coding done in the program.

XVI. Standard: Program Outcomes Reporting

Standard:

Programs must on an annual basis evaluate their effectiveness in achieving the instructional goals and AHIMA's coding competencies. Such evaluation of outcomes should include job placement rates, and student and employer satisfaction with the program. The results of this process must be reflected in the curriculum and other dimensions of the program.

Files to be attached:

- Provide a sample of the Graduate Satisfaction Survey used by the program.
- Provide a sample of the Employer Satisfaction Survey used by the program.
- Provide a statistical table including the numerator and denominator used for calculating each of the following.
- Student Retention Rates.
- Student Completion Rates.
- Job Placement Rates.
- Graduate Satisfaction with the Program.
- Employer Satisfaction with the Program.

Evidence:

- Explain the external evaluation process used by this program; and how findings of the outcomes reporting are communicated with the Advisory Committee.
- Explain the process of distributing and collection satisfaction surveys.