2017 Standards for Accreditation of Master's Degree Programs in Health Informatics (MHI)

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 and Accreditation (CHEA).

CAHIIM is located at 233 N. Michigan Avenue, 21st Floor, Chicago, Illinois, 60601, and on the web at www.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 organization(s) cooperate to establish, maintain, and promote appropriate standards of quality for postsecondary educational programs in health informatics and information management to provide competent, skilled professionals for the healthcare industry.

Mission

CAHIIM strives to carry out its mission by promoting, evaluating, and improving the quality of undergraduate and graduate health informatics and information management education.

Through our partnership with academe and the practice fields, CAHIIM serves colleges and universities in a voluntary peer review process as a means to continuously improve quality education to meet healthcare workforce needs. CAHIIM accreditation becomes the benchmark by which students and employers determine the integrity of health informatics and health information management education.

Vision

CAHIIM is the globally recognized and trusted accreditation organization for Health Informatics and Health Information Management education programs to ensure the development of a workforce that meets the challenge of an information-intensive environment and its impact on global health.

Introduction

For the purposes of CAHIIM Health Informatics Accreditation, the discipline of health informatics exists at the confluence of three major domains: *Health, Information Science and Technology, and Social and Behavioral Science*. Students in this discipline are expected to have *working knowledge* of these three domains as these domains define and affect the practice of health informatics.

Where two domains of knowledge intermingle, each affects the other, and the program graduate is expected to demonstrate the *knowledge, skills, and attitudes* that exist in these co-mingled domains: *Health Information Science and Technology, Human Factors and Socio-technical Systems, and Social and Behavioral Aspects of Health*.

Where all three domains intermingle, the program graduate is expected to demonstrate the *knowledge, skills, and attitudes* that exist in this most complex domain: *Social, Behavioral, and Information Science and Technology Applied to Health*.

As with all other health professions, the work of health informaticians affects the health, safety, and effectiveness of those working and being cared for within the system of health care delivery. Graduate students are expected to demonstrate the *knowledge and skills,* reflecting the domains of *Professionalism, Interprofessional Collaborative Practice, and Leadership.*

I. Sponsorship

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.

II. Systematic Planning

2. Program Mission

The program's mission and goals must form the basis for program planning and implementation, be compatible with the mission of the sponsoring educational institution and reflect the principles and ethics of the health informatics program.

Each program will define its own mission and goals which derive from the purposes of its sponsoring educational institution, communities of interest, faculty expertise, research initiatives, and the values of the field of health informatics.

(See: A Code of Professional Ethical Conduct for AMIA: https://www.amia.org/about-amia/ethics and http://jamia.oxfordjournals.org/content/20/1/141.full-text.pdf)

3. Program Quality

The program must be involved in an ongoing effort to determine its effectiveness, which constitutes a quality improvement cycle. Results of the program annual assessment must be monitored and reflected in an action plan and reviewed by the program's advisory board. Implementation of the action plan must be documented and results measured by ongoing assessment. The program's goals must be stated in terms of educational outcomes to be achieved and made sufficiently explicit and defined with measureable target outcome statements.

4. Program Assessment

A program assessment plan exists that includes systematic evaluation of the mission, goals and outcomes and a process for continuous improvement, in compliance with the sponsoring educational institution's overall evaluation plan.

5. Annual Assessment

Accredited programs must annually assess their program goals and outcomes as required by the designated CAHIIM reporting system. The program must use the results of annual assessments to document program improvements. Data analysis and action plans must be documented. A program must document how it meets its goals and objectives and how it plans to address weaknesses observed.

6. Student Achievement and Outcomes

The program must state, assess annually and publish on its website at minimum, student outcomes which must include annual enrollment numbers and graduation rate.

III. Program Autonomy and Governance

7. Program Governance

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

8. Program Leadership

The program must clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the program director that are necessary to fully support

and sustain the program. The program director or equivalent must have a minimum of a doctorate degree. The qualifications and responsibilities of the individual(s) responsible for leadership of the health informatics program must be documented.

9. Faculty
The program must clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the faculty necessary to fully support and sustain the program. The number of full-time faculty appointed at the rank of assistant, associate, or full professor must be sufficient to ensure that teaching, research and service goals of the program are met.

Part-time and adjunct faculty must be recognized as an important faculty component. The size of the faculty complement in relationship to the size of the number of enrolled students in the program must support and encourage effective and regular student/faculty interactions.

An appropriate student/faculty ratio depends on a number of factors, including the nature of the institution, the range of teaching responsibilities, and teaching intensity (such as didactic material, projects, practice experiences, research).

10. Faculty Qualifications
The qualifications of each faculty member must include competence in assigned teaching areas, effectiveness in teaching, and scholarly productivity consistent with their faculty appointment.

11. Faculty Performance
Each faculty (including part time and adjunct faculty) member's performance must be evaluated and documented according to the institution's policies. Evaluation includes teaching effectiveness and scholarly productivity consistent with their appointment. Within applicable institutional policies, faculty, students, and others must be sufficiently involved in the evaluation process.

IV. Program Curriculum

12. Core Concentration
The health informatics program must be established as a core concentration or specialized track within a graduate level program of study that culminates with a master's degree.

13. Program-Specific Curriculum
The program's curriculum must reflect the program's mission, goals and objectives. The curriculum must build on the minimum health informatics competencies as specified in the *AMIA Competencies for Health Informatics Education at the Masters Degree Level.* The curriculum must include evaluation methods used to assess student learning outcomes. The curriculum must focus on the knowledge, skills and values as outlined by the program. CAHIIM will validate alignment of competencies and outcome assessments with the program's mission, goals and objectives.

14. Staying Current
The program curriculum must stay current with evolving issues and practices in health informatics. The program must demonstrate how the curriculum is routinely updated and relevant

15. Online Content Delivery
Academic technologies, software applications and simulations, and online or web-enhanced courses, have a significant role in the in learning environment. To fairly evaluate online content the program must provide CAHIIM with full access to all online course content and relevant education applications used to deliver this content.

V. Resources

16. Professional Development

The program must provide opportunities for faculty to stay current with evolving issues and practices in health informatics. Examples of acceptable mechanisms may include but are not limited to continuing education, memberships and contributions to professional organizations, links with industry.

17. Resources and Services

The instructional resources and services provided for the program including access to reference/ library and information technology, as well as other resources used in the curriculum must be adequate, appropriately staffed and accessible by all students regardless of the delivery mode of the program.

18. Financial Resources

Resources to support the program's goals and outcomes must include evidence of financial support for the program fro m the sponsoring institution.

The program must demonstrate that financial resources are adequate to support and maintain the program offered.

19. 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 assist program faculty and sponsoring educational institution personnel in formulating and periodically revising appropriate goals and curriculum, monitoring needs and expectations, and ensuring program responsiveness to change. CAHIIM standards emphasize the importance of a strong advisory committee comprised of individuals external to the academic institution such as employers, graduates, and others representative of the communities of interest.

20. Student Advisement

The program must have an effective and accessible academic advising system for students, as well as readily available career and placement advice. Career paths of graduates must be monitored, documented and used in the annual program assessment. Each student enrolled in the program must have access to advisors who are knowledgeable about the program's curriculum and specific courses.

VI. Fair Practices

21. Accurate Published Information

All published program information must accurately reflect the program offered and must be known to all applicants and students and must include:
• The sponsoring educational institution and programmatic accreditation status.
• The admissions policies and procedures.
• The policies for advanced placement, transfer credits and credits for experiential learning.
• The number of credits required for completion of the program.
• All tuition/fees and other costs required to complete the program.
• The policies and procedures for withdrawal and for refunds of tuition/fees.
• The Academic Calendar.
• The Student grievance procedures.
• The criteria for successful completion of each segment of the curriculum and graduation including prerequisites, co-requisites, minimum grade point average, and required courses.

22 Lawful and Non-Discriminatory Practices

All activities associated with the program, including student and faculty recruitment, student admission, and faculty employment practices, must be non-discriminatory and in accordance with federal and state statutes, rules, and regulations.

VII. Administrative Requirements for Maintenance of Accreditation

23. Submission of CAHIIM required reports by the determined deadline date.

24. Participation in a designated periodic site visit of the accredited program.

25. Written notification of any institutional and programmatic substantive changes affecting the program's accreditation in accordance with CAHIIM policy.

26. The sponsoring institution must continue to pay all required fees to maintain its program accreditation status.