



Professional Practice Experience Handbook

Health Information Management

Students enrolled in Franklin University's B.S. Health Information Management (HIM) program must complete an internship in the HIM 497 course, the Professional Practice Experience (PPE), as a requirement for graduation. The PPE is designed as a practical educational experience for which the student receives a grade and course credit, and an opportunity to demonstrate competencies learned across the HIM curriculum. Students will identify an appropriate healthcare-related site, develop a PPE project with associated learning outcomes, and deliver a formal presentation regarding their internship experience. The PPE must consist of no less than eighty (80) hours of supervised work. Since the design of a PPE requires a substantial amount of planning and coordination between the student, the site, and the University, **the student must submit a completed PPE Proposal to the HIM Program Chair at least 8 weeks prior to the proposed start date.**

Note: Students are strongly cautioned that some healthcare facilities may refuse to accept them based on the results of the required background check. Each student should be aware that successful completion of the supervised PPE is a required element of the HIM program and the inability to do so for any reason, including a documented criminal conviction, will result in the student's failure to satisfy the requirements of the major as specified in the Academic Bulletin. All PPE-related questions should be directed to the HIM Program Chair.

All forms related to the PPE may be found on the [program website](#).

FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY STANDARDS

The Community Standards apply to the off-campus conduct of Franklin University students and registered student organizations in direct connection with academic course requirements or any credit-bearing experiences which include, but are not limited to, internships or field trips.

Franklin University students are responsible for creating and maintaining an atmosphere conducive to learning and personal growth that is respectful of the rights of others. Students' voluntary enrollment at Franklin University obliges them to comply with its regulations and procedures, which they are expected to read and understand. All students are accountable for their actions both on and off campus. More information about University policies can be found here: <http://www.franklin.edu/student-services/campus-information/university-policies>

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

1. Access the PPE Student Checklist on the [Program Website](#).
2. Because of the unique requirements of a healthcare internship, all students must pass specific medical screenings and a criminal background check. **Students who are unable to successfully complete these requirements will not be permitted to complete the HIM program. In addition, each work site may have unique requirements which the student is responsible for fulfilling.**
3. The PPE student is not intended to replace paid workers at the chosen site; however, students are **not** precluded from arranging a paid internship.

4. The PPE must have defined learning outcomes and deliverables included in the PPE Proposal Form.
5. The PPE may include virtual or on-site work experience, or a combination of both.
6. Students currently employed by a healthcare facility may complete a PPE at that site, as long as it is substantially different work from their normal duties, is supervised by a different manager, and meets all other requirements of a PPE (i.e., includes appropriate learning outcomes and deliverables).
7. All PPE proposals must be reviewed and approved by the Site Supervisor and the HIM Program Chair prior to enrolling in HIM 497.
8. Student and Site Supervisor evaluations are required on a periodic basis as part of the overall
9. PPE grade.
10. Students are responsible for their own transportation, parking, meals, and other necessary personal items for the duration of the PPE.
11. Students are responsible for completing all training or other activities required by the specific site.

STUDENT GUIDELINES

1. Attendance

Absenteeism and tardiness are considered unprofessional and undesirable traits. While there may be times when a student is absent due to illness or other valid reason, it is the student's responsibility to make up the time, per University policy.

- If a student is unable to work on a specified day, it is his/her responsibility to provide appropriate notification and to negotiate arrangements for making up the missed time with his/her PPE site supervisor.
- If a student is running late, he/she must contact the PPE site supervisor and give him/her an estimated arrival time.
- Do not ask to leave early – students are expected to complete a prescribed number of hours in the field to fulfill the PPE experience. If a student must depart early, he/she should make necessary arrangements with the PPE site supervisor, so that any missed hours are made up.
- Excessive absenteeism and tardiness will adversely affect the student's grade for the PPE course.

2. Appearance

Students should practice professionalism by presenting an appropriate appearance.

- Adhere to the facility's dress code—dress in suitable business casual or office attire.
 - For example, women should wear blouses and skirts, dresses, or dress slacks with hose or socks. Men should wear dress shirts, ties, and dress slacks with socks. Jeans, shorts, sneakers, and tee shirts should not be worn—avoid extremes in jewelry, hairstyles, body piercing and tattoos, and make-up.
 - Students are working in close proximity with professional staff, and as such must be aware of personal hygiene. Issues such as the use of strong perfumes/colognes, tobacco odors, deodorant issues and the like must be considered.
 - Students should wear an identification badge at all times.
 - If students have questions regarding proper attire and appearance, such questions should be discussed with the HIM Program Chair or site supervisor.

3. Conduct

Students should demonstrate professional conduct throughout the course of the PPE.

- Demonstrate initiative by completing activities as assigned.
- If assignments are completed early, ask for additional work rather than waiting for someone to notice.
- There may be times when clinical personnel are unavailable to work with a student. During those times, use initiative to interview staff, maintain PPE activity log, review policy manuals, and so on.
- Cell phones should not be used during working hours, this includes texting. Make personal calls and texts only at break and lunch times. Additionally, the personal use of other electronic devices, such MP3 players, pagers, iPads and iPods, is unprofessional in the PPE setting.
- At NO TIME, should pictures be taken at a healthcare facility (including “selfies”) as these might inadvertently capture protected health information.
- Do not surf the internet during working hours, this includes checking e-mail and logging into social networking sites.
- Demonstrate a professional attitude during any unexpected situations that might occur.
 - The student should offer assistance, if appropriate. Otherwise, he/she should observe silently or leave the area.
 - Remember, much can be learned by observing how other professionals handle difficult situations.
- Utilize professional communication in all formats, face-to-face conversations, email, and phone contact Be sure to always identify yourself as a student intern.
- Students should contact their PPE site supervisor prior to beginning the PPE to make introductions, obtain driving and parking information, and ask questions related to appropriate attire.

- The student should be cognizant of the professional titles used in the healthcare setting. Medical professionals, patients, and coworkers should be addressed in the appropriate manner at all times (for example, Dr. Jones, Ms. Smith, or Mr. Johnson).
- Maintain professional relationships by avoiding personal discussions.
- As a professional, a student is expected to handle minor difficulties that arise. However, if attempts to resolve the situation have been unsuccessful, these matters should be brought to the attention of the PPE Site Supervisor, and the HIM Program Chair and/or PPE Coordinator.
- Gossiping or complaining is not acceptable professional behavior with site staff or other students. If issues arise, they should be discussed with the HIM Program Chair or Site Supervisor.
- The student should maintain a daily log of activities accomplished during the PPE. This log should be shared with the Site Supervisor periodically to see what has been accomplished, what needs to be completed in the time remaining, and what activities can be added or deleted.
- The student is encouraged to send personal, handwritten thank-you notes to the PPE Site Supervisor and specific individuals who contributed to the experience.

4. Ethics and Confidentiality

Students are expected to:

- Adhere to the guidelines set forth by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) Code of Ethics.
- Abide by Franklin University's Code of Student Conduct.
- Abide by applicable site/facility policies and procedures.
- Abide by HIPAA rules.

SUGGESTED SITES FOR PPE PLACEMENT

Note: the HIM Program Chair will make every effort to assist students in securing an appropriate PPE site.

1. Healthcare Facilities
 - Hospitals
 - Physician offices (primary care and specialty)
 - Pharmacies
 - Nursing homes or other long-term care facilities
 - Home health care agencies
 - Other (therapy, dialysis, mental health, etc.)
2. Public Health Agencies
 - Free clinics
 - Local, state, or federal public health departments

3. Government Agencies
 - Department of Health and Human Services (Medicare/Medicaid)
 - Entities responsible for implementation or administration of the Affordable Care Act
 - Veterans Affairs

4. Other Healthcare-related Entities
 - Insurance companies
 - Billing companies, data centers, etc.
 - Electronic Health Record (EHR) vendors
 - Private research or analytics companies

SUGGESTED PPE PROJECTS

- EHR: implementation, training, template design, workflow configuration, GUI design, etc.
- Documentation conversions: patient intake, medication reconciliation, patient discharge, etc.
- Quality improvement: research, data analysis, recommendations, project management, etc.
- Coding: training, audits, quality improvement design, clinical documentation improvement, etc.
- Reimbursement: AR reviews, fee schedule updates/analysis, claims error reconciliation, etc.
- Information systems: evaluate issues in MPI, data dictionary, database architecture, workflow, etc.
- PHR, HIE, and PHIN: assist with interoperability issues, planning, project management, standards, privacy and security, etc.
- Risk management: review and develop policies to strengthen the organization's risk avoidance, develop employee HIPAA training, etc.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR SITE SUPERVISORS

RESPONSIBILITIES

Before the PPE begins, the Site Supervisor must work with the student and HIM Program Chair to:

1. Verify with Human Resources, Security, and any other appropriate department, what obligations the student needs to complete before beginning work at the facility. Common requirements include health screenings, criminal background checks and so on. **Please allow the student sufficient time to complete necessary documentation and/or trainings prior to beginning the PPE.**
2. Identify the total number of project hours (a minimum of eighty (80) is required) the student must complete before he or she begins.
3. Obtain a copy of any evaluation forms to be completed during the PPE period.
4. Identify organizational needs and coordinate with the student to develop an appropriate project and complete the PPE Proposal form.
5. Coordinate with the appropriate organizational department and the PPE Coordinator to facilitate the completion of the Site Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
6. Identify the department and site mentors for the student and meet with these individuals before the student begins work to:
 - a. Coordinate the student's schedule and project.
 - b. Discuss or provide the school's expectations for the student.

- c. Review key expectations, including specific expectations for the student to accomplish during his or her time with the mentor (for example, skill-building versus completing a project).
7. Identify any credentialed mentors at the facility who might provide substantive oversight and engagement with the student, and are therefore eligible to earn AHIMA CEUs.
8. Compile basic materials as reference documents for the student:
 - a. Department organizational charts and other pertinent organizational entities
 - b. Phone, e-mail addresses, and other contact information of key resource individuals
 - c. A schedule with the names and locations of individuals with whom the student will spend time
 - d. Any reference materials related to the student's project
9. Arrange for temporary access to computer systems, parking, or other security issues as appropriate to the organization.
10. Identify and reserve space for the student to work.
11. Team Assimilation—allow the student to become part of the team. The student should attend lunch, breaks, and any meetings with the team.

The Student's First Day:

1. Spend scheduled time with the student for a brief orientation to the department.
2. Provide any reference materials necessary (i.e., coding books, access to databases, etc.)
3. Discuss the work schedule for the PPE.
4. Introduce the student to key resource individuals in the department and other departments.
5. Have the student sign confidentiality and security agreements, and any other required documents.

Throughout the PPE:

1. Meet regularly to review the student's projects and documentation.
2. Meet regularly to verify that the PPE is meeting the student's expectations and that he/she is receiving all the necessary resources and providing deliverables on schedule.
3. Review expectations with the student and discuss how he/she is meeting them at the midpoint or other appropriate intervals.
4. Meet with personnel who worked with the student for feedback.
5. Provide feedback via the PPE evaluation form at scheduled intervals and/or meetings with the PPE Instructor.

At the Completion of the PPE:

Schedule the final evaluation and provide copies to the student and the University as requested by the HIM Program Chair and/or instruction.

UNIVERSITY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Verify student's eligibility to participate in the PPE
2. Provide student with the PPE Handbook including:
 - a. Student, site and University responsibilities
 - b. Sample sites and PPE activities
 - c. Supervisor Evaluation form
 - d. Student Evaluation form
3. Initiate the MOU with the site
4. Assist students with identification of appropriate PPE sites and projects
5. Provide a resource for student/site issues or concerns
6. Approve each PPE Proposal for appropriate learning outcomes and overall project objectives
7. Communicate throughout the PPE with both the student and site supervisor
8. Award CEUs to AHIMA-credentialed site supervisors/mentors, as appropriate

RECEIVING CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS FOR CREDENTIALLED STAFF

When a facility accepts an HIM student for a PPE, the time spent coordinating the visit and mentoring the student can count toward completion of professional CEUs. Credentialed professionals can claim five (5) CEUs per year (or ten (10) CEUs per two year cycle) for work performed with HIM students during the PPE. The student's daily log should serve as proof of time the student spent with credentialed individuals. At the end of the PPE, the HIM Program Chair and/or PPE Coordinator will verify appropriate CEU awards and a certificate(s) will be provided to the site.