

CHA

Learning

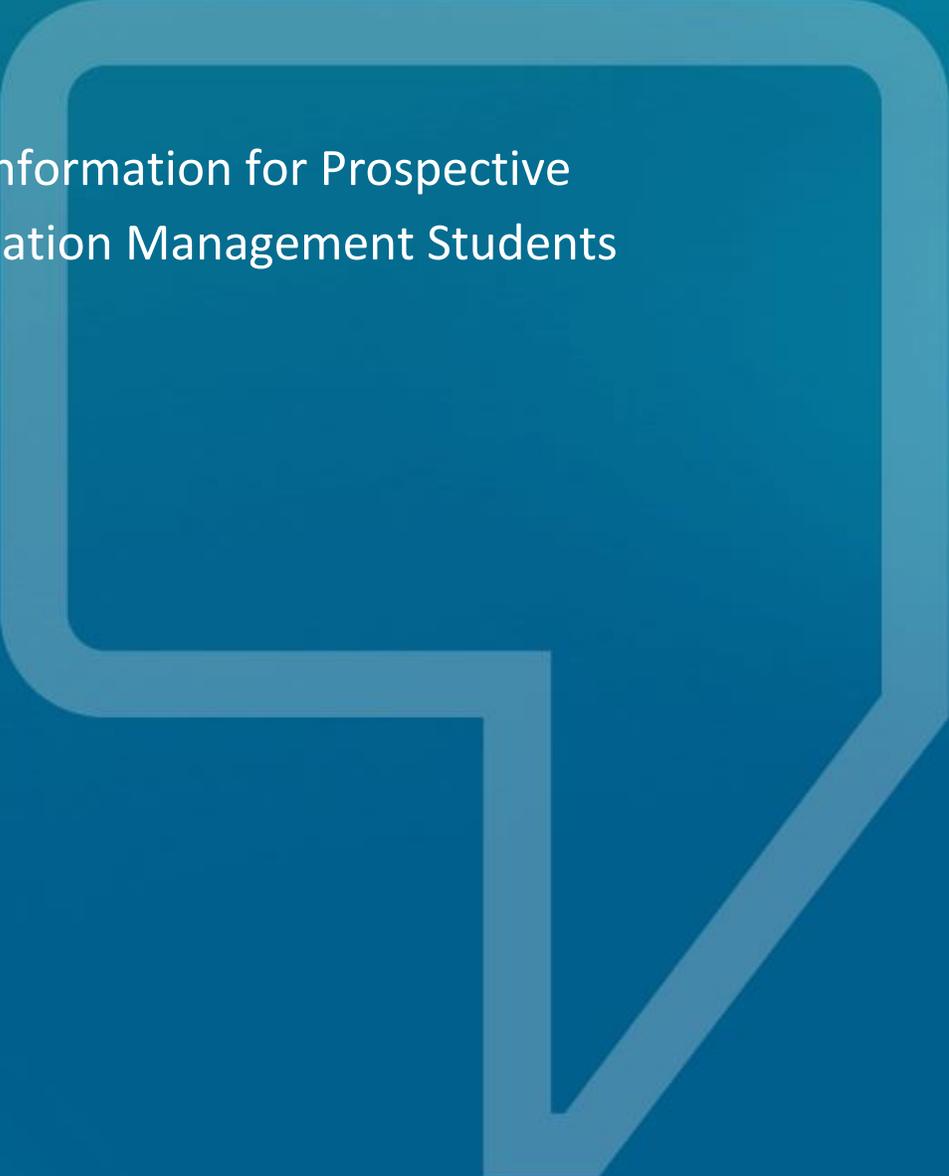
a division of  HealthCareCAN

Offered in partnership with

ALGONQUIN
COLLEGE

Health Information Management

Practicum Information for Prospective
Health Information Management Students





Practicum Information for Prospective Students

Thank you for your interest in the Health Information Management Program at CHA Learning/HealthCareCAN. Please read through the information below carefully for more information about program practicums and how to arrange them in your area.

Overview

Purpose of Practicums

Students in Health Information Management complete a total of 10 weeks, or 350 practicum hours over the course of the program. The practicums are to be completed in blocks of 35 or 70 hours (one- or two-week practicums).

The practicum component is an integral and mandatory part of the program at CHA Learning and is a requirement of the Canadian Health Information Management Association (CHIMA). Practical experiences reinforce learning through hands-on experience and provide an opportunity to develop and improve students' skills concurrently with the educational component.

Practicums are also an opportunity to network with organizations and potentially make contacts for employment. Remember, your practicum supervisor could be your employer one day, so it is important to make a good impression!

Where can I complete my practicum?

Students must arrange to complete their practicums in a Health Information Management department under the supervision of a Health Information Management professional. The placement can be completed in various HIM-related areas such as Health Records, Privacy, Information Technology, Decision Support, Research environments, Ministries of Health, and all types of health care facilities from acute to community care. Although acute care hospitals probably provide the most well-rounded experience, students are encouraged to seek practicums in areas of interest. However, in order to meet all required learning objectives, students who wish to secure practicum placements in a non-hospital environment may require a secondary site in a hospital in order to complete the coding-based practicums.

Students who already work in a health organization may complete their practicums at their workplace. For students who are specifically working in an HIM department, it is recommended that they complete at least one practicum at a different site or area in order to acquire a variety of experiences, but this is not mandatory. Hours completed for the purpose of the HIM program practicums must be unpaid.

In order to complete practicums, students may need to take vacation time or leaves of absence. Generally, practicums must be completed in one-week blocks, though some flexibility may be possible, with approval of CHA Learning.

Who can supervise my practicum?

The practicum supervisor must be a CHIMA certified professional. They must occupy a lead or managerial role in the department and actively be involved with overseeing the area where the student will be completing the placement activities. The practicum supervisor may assign portions of the practicum to other professionals within the department; however, they are ultimately responsible for your experience on site, and for evaluating your practicum activities.

When should I start looking for a practicum supervisor?

Students are responsible for securing their own practicum placements with a facility in their area. We recommend that you start looking for a practicum as soon as possible in the application process. Some practicum sites may fill up early depending on the demand in your area.

- Students in the Two-Year stream must submit proof of practicum support with their application to the HIM program.
- Students in the Four-Year stream will begin practicums in the second year of studies and will submit proof of practicum support in the Spring of their first year of studies.

****Please note there is an alternate practicum process for residents of Alberta. Please read through the full information on the HIM website.***

Important: Successful applicants will be required to submit vaccination requirements and a police record check upon admission. These documents are a requirement for practicum placements. Beginning with the September 2020 HIM program intake, students will be required to submit their vaccine and criminal record documentation through a reputable and verified external agency that also works with Algonquin College. CHA Learning will no longer collect these documents directly from students. Please do not acquire these documents until we ask you. Please note that there will be fees associated with this service (approximately \$50 plus any costs associated with gathering documentation). CHA Learning will provide information to students accepted into the program about how to proceed with this step at the appropriate time.

When can I schedule my practicum weeks?

Each practicum must be completed by the student by a specified deadline in the given Semester (see table below). Scheduling of the actual practicum session dates is flexible, to be determined by the student and the practicum site. However, students should not be starting their practicums until after mid-term exams in each semester. If alternate dates need to be arranged, students should contact CHA Learning in advance of the practicum placement.

Two-Year Stream

Semester	Practicum	# of Hours	Completed Practicum Package Due to CHA Learning by:
Year One Semester One (Fall)	150	35	Mid December
Year One Semester Two (Winter)	250	35	Late May
	252	35	Late June
	255	70	Late July
Year Two Semester One (Fall)	350	35	Mid December
Year Two Semester Two (Winter)	450	35	Late May
	452	35	Late June
	455	70	Late July

Four-Year Stream

Semester	Practicum	# of Hours	Completed Practicum Package Due to CHA Learning by:
Year Two Semester One (Fall)	150	35	Mid December
Year Two Semester Two (Winter)	250	35	Late May
	252	35	Late June
Year Three Semester One (Fall)	255	70	Mid December
Year Three Semester Two (Winter)	350	35	Late May
Year Four Semester One (Fall)	450	35	Mid December
	452	35	Mid December
Year Four Semester Two (Winter)	455	70	Late July

Other important information:

WSIB

In most facilities, students are required to have Workplace Safety/ Workers' Compensation (WSIB/WCB) coverage in order to secure placements. CHA Learning is aware that this can sometimes be challenging. Currently, CHA Learning is only able to provide students in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia with workplace insurance coverage for placements. If you require workplace safety insurance, you must contact CHA Learning to request it.

Meanwhile, CHA Learning strongly encourages students to purchase personal disability and/or critical injury insurance from your own personal insurance provider.

Insurance

Please note, CHA Learning does have comprehensive general liability and errors & omissions insurance in the amount of \$5,000,000. If the facility would like a copy of the liability insurance certificate, please contact your CHA Learning Program Coordinator.

Affiliation Agreements

If your organization requires an affiliation agreement, please contact chalearning@healthcarecan.ca

Roles and Responsibilities for Practicums

Student	Practicum Site	CHA Learning
Approach potential sites and secure practicum in a timely fashion, prior to program application.	Accept or deny students based on resources and availability.	Provide guidelines and support to students in approaching sites and securing practicums.
Have Practicum Support Letter completed by practicum supervisor and included with program application	Upon acceptance, sign Practicum Support Letter and support student through duration of their program.	
Ensure timely compliance with organizational requirements, policies and procedures including immunization, criminal record checks and other documentation	Communicate organizational requirements to student and/or CHA Learning as applicable.	As appropriate, meet organizational requirements for documentation and support, and/or discuss any requirements with organizations as required.
Inform CHA Learning of any site-specific requirements requiring input	Work with student and CHA Learning to facilitate compliance with any organizational requirements, as required.	Facilitate provision of documentation and special site requirements, such as affiliation agreements.
After entry to program, provide practicum guides to practicum supervisor	Review practicum guides with student and team in planning practicum activities.	Develop and provide clear practicum guides which include well-defined learning activities and outcomes. Support sites and students as required to facilitate the learning experience.
Ensure practicum session dates are booked with practicum site and completed by CHA Learning's deadlines.	Work with student to book practicum session dates that are mutually convenient, and which allow the student to meet deadlines.	Set clear practicum deadlines at the beginning of the academic year.
Abide by practicum guidelines, learning activities and objectives.	Provide appropriate experience to meet learning objectives and activities. Discuss with student and CHA learning any requirement for exceptions.	
Act professionally and courteously in all dealings with practicum site.	Support ongoing student learning and application of knowledge in practice.	Support students and practicum sites in managing situations of conflict or difficulty.

Ensure completion of practicum deliverables or projects, and that practicum supervisor evaluates each practicum session.	Evaluate each practicum session and any projects or deliverables using provided forms.	Provide clear evaluation forms. Assess final practicum evaluations and deliverables.
--	--	--

Important Notes:

-The regulations around arranging practicums operate differently in the province of Alberta compared to other areas of Canada. **Alberta residents must follow an alternate application process.** Please see the HIM Program website for more details. Please note that there is also an earlier application deadline for Alberta residents.

-Acceptance by the practicum site does not guarantee acceptance to the HIM Program at CHA Learning. Students must apply and meet the program requirements for entry into the program.

-CHA Learning *does not* keep an inventory of practicum sites, contacts or site requirements. CHA Learning has students from across Canada and cannot maintain a database of such information given changing requirements and numerous jurisdictions in which our students reside.

-Beginning in 2020, applicants who have not secured a practicum site will still be considered for admission. Under limited circumstances, alternative practicum projects are available. Fees and restrictions apply.

Guidelines for Approaching a Practicum Site

If a student does not have any existing contacts with an HIM department, it is recommended that they approach local hospitals or healthcare organizations to discuss placement opportunities, and ideally set up a meeting with the head of the HIM department or service.

It is important to handle these encounters with professionalism, as you would a job opportunity. The practicum supervisor has a choice as to which students they accept for placement, and could become a potential employer in the future.

When you meet with your potential practicum site, bring with you a copy of the “**Practicum package for Supervisors**” located on the HIM website. This is a document for you to provide to a potential supervisor. It contains details the site will require to confirm your placement and is a good starting point for discussion.

Sample script when approaching an HIM Manager:

Hello my name is _____,

I am contacting you today because I am very interested in the field of Health Information Management.

I am in the process of applying to the Health Information Management Program at CHA Learning/HealthCareCAN. As an HIM student, I will need a practicum site that will help me apply my learning in practice and prepare for my career in HIM. As a student, I would not only be learning about the work your department does but become better prepared for the field.

I am inquiring if you or someone in your facility would be willing to act as my practicum supervisor. I have further details I can share about the program and its requirements.

Be prepared to answer interview-type questions and discuss your background and interest in this career area.

Other information to provide/questions to ask:

-I am interested/passionate about HIM because _____.

-I think I am suited to work in this profession because _____.

-Is there is specific procedure to follow in order to apply to complete a practicum at your facility?

-Is there any documentation that you require from me in order to secure this placement?

Prospective Student Inquiries:

CHA Learning

Phone: 613-241-8005, option 1

Toll- Free: 1-855-236-0213, option 1

E-mail: chalearning@healthcarecan.ca