Health Information Technology (HIT)

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Associate in Applied Science Degree (5-6 semesters)

At a Glance

If your interests include high tech, computers, and medicine then why not combine healthcare and technology? Consider a career in health information management. It just may be the thing for you.

The Health Information Technician is a skilled professional who analyzes and evaluates highly sensitive data in health records. Skills of the Health Information Technician are varied but include the following: supervising the release of health information, maintaining and utilizing information storage and retrieval systems, compiling various health statistics, and supervising electronic health information management systems. Health information technicians may be employed by any facility that manages patient information, such as a hospital, clinic, physician office, insurance company, or medical research center. The Health Information Technology degree is the preferred training for medical coding specialists. The medical coding specialists perform detailed review of medical records to identify diagnoses and operative procedures. Alphanumeric and/or numeric classification codes are assigned to each diagnosis and procedure using automated or manual methods. Principle classification systems used include the International Classification of Diseases (ICD), Current Procedural Terminology (CPT), and the current Procedural Coding System (PCS).

Health Information professionals play a vital role in making our healthcare system work. They perform the data collection and analysis that doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals need to do their jobs well and are a key part of quality patient care. With experience, the RHIT credentialed individual holds potential for advancement to management positions. This program is offered through online classes with the exception of professional practice experiences.

Program Description

The Health Information Technology (HIT) Program at WSCC is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM). Only graduates of CAHIIM-accredited programs are eligible to take the national examination to become Registered Health Information Technicians (RHITs). Technicians trained in non-CAHIIM accredited programs or trained on the job are not eligible to take the examination. Wallace State Community College is one of only two CAHIIM-accredited programs in the State of Alabama.

Students have the opportunity to spend many hours in a simulation lab or a professional setting to practice skills obtained in the classroom. Students enrolled in professional practice experience (professional) courses are assigned hours consistent with day shift. Assignment for professional practice experience will be at the discretion of program officials, and students may be required to travel to different locations for the 'hands on' training.

Full-time Program: A student who has completed all HIT required general education courses may complete the HIT program courses in four semesters. HIT courses, excluding professional practice experience classes, are completed **online.**

Part-time Program: A student who has completed all HIT general education courses may choose to complete the program by taking classes on a part-time basis. The program is expected to be completed within two years (or eight semesters) following entry into the program.

Online Program: A student must schedule HIT online classes in accordance with either the full-time or part-time completion option. The professional practice experience activities must be completed on day shift, not online. HIT students who live within 75 miles of campus must attend on-campus professional practice experience class meetings. Instructors may require online students to take make-up exams on campus. Instructors may also require online course exams to be proctored, according to program policy. On campus classes are not available.

Admission Requirements

1. Unconditional admission to the college – College application must be submitted by the program application deadline of June 1.
2. Student must be in good standing with the college.
3. Receipt of complete program applications accepted between March 1 and June 1 for Fall entry. Applications received after the deadline will be considered on a space available basis.
4. The HIT program online application is located on program's webpage at www.wallacestate.edu. Online application instructions are under the *Application to Program* tab. All applicants are required to upload all necessary documentation for consideration.
5. Official transcripts from each college attended must be provided to the Admissions Office and all unofficial transcripts must be uploaded. Students must include

transcripts from **ALL** colleges attended.

6. Student must meet the essential functions and technical standards required for the program as documented on the required WSCC physical form at www.wallacestate.edu-see Physical Form Essential Functions.
7. A minimum of 17 ACT composite score (National or Residual) is required for admission consideration. Proof of score must be uploaded.
8. Must possess a minimum 2.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale with a grade of "C" or better on all general required pre-HIT courses. Grade point average is calculated using only HIT major and HIT general education courses.
9. Complete all HIT required general education courses and HIT 110 (with a grade of "C" or better before June 1) to be considered for HIT program admission in fall semester. Students who complete required HIT general education classes with at least a grade of "C" between June 2 and September 1 may be considered for program acceptance on a space available basis.

Selection and Notification
1. The Health Information Technology program admits one class annually in the fall. Students will be admitted to program courses during the fall semester only, with the exception of HIT 110 a 3-semester hour course and HIT 115. HIT 110 Medical Terminology must be completed before program admission. Students can enroll in HIT 115 prior to program acceptance.
2. Admission to the Health Information Technology program is competitive, and the number of students is limited by the number of faculty and clinical facilities available. Meeting minimal requirements does not guarantee acceptance.
3. Candidates are ranked for admission on the basis of ACT scores, weighted GPA (GPA x 9) and completion of admission requirements.
4. Program applications will be reviewed for completion of program admission requirements. Students accepted into the HIT program will be notified in writing by the HIT Program Director. The notification will be mailed to the student at the address on the application. Students who are not accepted will also receive written notification. Program acceptance or rejection will not be given over the phone or via e-mail.
5. Students selected must respond, confirming their intent to enroll within a specified time from the postmarked date of the acceptance letter. A student who fails to respond will forfeit his/her place in the class.

Program Expectations
Students admitted into the Health Information Technology program are expected to comply with the Health Science Program Regulations and Expectations as published in the Programs of Study section of the Wallace State College Catalog.
Required Competencies:

1. HIM compliance with medical coding, release of information, regulatory requirements.
2. Revenue cycle management, coding documentation, perform coding audits, utilization review.
3. Knowledge of health data structure, content and standards.
4. Quality management and performance improvement skills.
5. Access, disclosure, privacy and security of private health information.
6. Data analysis and use, healthcare statistics, registries, auditing procedures.
7. Maintenance and monitoring of data storage systems.
8. Application of leadership concepts and techniques, including management functions.

Upon Admission
1. Students selected for acceptance **must attend the mandatory orientation session** (or view and listen to the online version if residence is greater than 75 miles from campus). All students must score 100 on the post-orientation exam posted in the HIT Student Center. Failure to do so before the program established deadline will result in forfeiture of their space in the class, resulting in administrative withdrawal of the student from all HIT classes.
2. Selected students, at the request of the Professional Practice Course instructor, must submit:
   a. Documentation of recent physical exam on the proper program issued form
   b. Mantoux (2-step) TB skin test results.
   c. Proof of required vaccinations and at least the second of three Hepatitis B vaccinations (Hepatitis B, measles, mumps, rubella, TDap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis), Influenza, and varicella (chicken pox).
   d. Valid CPR certification - only CPR courses designed to certify health care providers are accepted
   e. Copy of current health insurance card (Health insurance coverage is required).
   f. Clear background check and drug screen according to college policy.
3. Failure to submit all required clinical documentation before the program established deadline will result in program dismissal.
4. Selected students must carry accident and malpractice insurance, available through the College at the time of registration for program classes. Health program students are also required to have health insurance coverage.

Progression
In order to progress in the Health Information Technology program:
1. Students must maintain a grade of "C" (70) or better in all major required Health Information Technology courses. A student will be dismissed from the program if he/she withdraws from, or makes a "D" or "F" in a HIT

course, or other program required course.

2. Students must register for and complete, with a grade of at least a "C", required program specific courses as advised by HIT program advisors each semester. Failure to enroll in these courses will result in program dismissal.

3. Students selected for admission to the program must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.5 in HIT required courses. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the program. Grade point average is calculated using only HIT major and HIT general education courses.

4. Graduation requirements must be met within 3 years prior to graduation from the program. Students who are in the HIT program greater than 3 years must retake certain classes to be eligible for graduation. Students who repeat HIT classes must apply the grade earned in the second (or last) attempt towards graduation requirements. Students who withdraw or are dismissed from the program and wish to be readmitted must reapply the following year and follow procedures and requirements for admission to the HIT program published in the current catalog. Readmission into the program will be allowed one time only. After the second dismissal from any healthcare information program, students are not eligible to apply for the HIT or MCC program.

5. Students who are accepted for readmission are required to repeat certain classes previously completed, such as lecture classes associated with lab classes. The grade for the second (or last) attempt will be applied towards graduation requirements.

6. Students are required to pass the HIT proficiency exam in the required class HIT 292. If a student does not score at least 70% on this proficiency exam, he/she will fail HIT 292 regardless of other HIT 292 course grades. See HIT Student Handbook and course syllabus for details.

7. Health Information Technology program faculty may require online course exams to be monitored/proctored via electronic and/or other methods according to program policy.

Readmission to Program
Students whose progression through the HIT program is interrupted and who desire to re-enter the program must schedule an appointment with the HIT Program Director to discuss re-entry. The student must apply for readmission to the HIT program according to published application deadlines. Students are only eligible for re-entry within one year from the term of withdrawal or failure. Students who apply for re-entry greater than one year after withdrawal or dismissal must repeat certain HIT courses. The grade earned in the second (or last) attempt in the HIT course is applied towards graduation requirements.

Reinstatement may be denied due to, but not limited to, any of the following circumstances:
1. Failure to possess a GPA of at least 2.5 for all HIT major and HIT general education courses.

2. Space unavailability in a course in which the student wished to be reinstated.

3. Refusal by clinical agencies to accept the student for professional practice.

4. Over 12 months have elapsed since the student was enrolled in a HIT course.

5. Student has been dismissed from the program.

Admission with Advanced Standing
1. Graduates from Wallace State Community College Medical Coding Certificate program are eligible for admission with advanced standing with submission of a complete HIT Program application, including a composite ACT score of at least 17 and unofficial transcripts showing a GPA of at least 2.5 on all HIT required courses. The complete application must be submitted by June 1.

2. All HIT prefix courses must have been completed with a minimum grade of "C" within the last 2 years to be accepted toward degree requirements. This applies only if there are no major changes to the RHIT Test specifications or classification system currently required by regulatory agencies.

3. All HIT general education courses must be complete with a grade of at least "C" by the end of the last semester in the HIT program.

Transfer Students
Students transferring into the Health Information Technology program must meet all requirements for admission to the program. Only with program director's approval those equivalent courses taken at other CAHIIM accredited programs within the last year prior to program admission will be considered for application toward completion of program requirements.

Career Path
The Health Information Technology degree curriculum prepares graduates to work in any setting that health information is generated (physician offices, nursing homes, hospitals, home health care agencies, insurance companies, etc.)

This is not a complete list, but graduates of this program may choose to work in any of the following areas:
- Quality Improvement (facilitates quality improvement projects in the facility)
- Revenue Cycle Management
- Release of Information (Coordinator or Privacy Officer)
- Medical Coding (Coder/DRG Specialist)
- Medical Office (Coordinator or Manager)
- Electronic Data Management/ Information Governance
- Compliance and Risk Management
- Data Analyst

Job prospects for graduates are very good. Employment of health information technicians is expected to grow faster

than the average for all occupations through 2026.

Entry level annual earnings of health information technicians are $25,000 - $30,000. Salaries increase with experience in the field to earnings of more than $40,000 per year. (Source: U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics)

NOTE: *The Guided Pathways Curricular Maps below contain all the elements required for degree/certificate completion. However, courses may be offered or taken in other semesters so long as prerequisites are met and courses are available. Additional option available. Please see DegreeWorks for allowable substitutions. General education courses may be available days, nights, hybrid, and online; HIT courses, excluding professional practice experience classes, are completed **online**. Sample maps for part-time attendance may also be available. Please see an advisor.*

ASSOCIATE DEGREE:
OPTION I – AAS HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY – Guided Pathway/Map

1st Semester

ORI 110	Freshman Seminar	1
ENG 101	English Composition I	3
CIS 146	Microcomputer Applications	3
MTH 116	Mathematical Applications	3
PSY 200	General Psychology	3
BIO 201**	Human Anatomy and Physiology I	4
	Total Semester Credit Hours	17

2nd Semester

SPH 106 or	Fundamentals of Oral Communication/	
ENG 102	English Composition II	3
IDS 102	Ethics	3
HIT 110	Medical Terminology	3
BIO 202**	Human Anatomy & Physiology II	4
	Total Semester Credit Hours	13

3rd Semester

HIT 115	Pathophysiology and Pharmacolog	4
HIT 153	Health Care Delivery Systems	2
HIT 151	Health Data Content and Structure	3
HIT 152	Skills Development Lab	1
HIT 158	Intro. toClinical Envir. for HIT/MCC	1
HIT 111	Diagnostics and Pharmacology	2
	Total Semester Credit Hours	13

4th Semester

HIT 130	Classification and Reimbursement	3
HIT 131	Classification Skills Lab	1
HIT 134	HIT Legal and Ethical Issues	3
HIT 160	HIT Clinical Practice I	1
HIT 221	HIT Computer Applications	2
HIT 222	HIT Computer Lab	1
HIT 230	Medical Coding Systems I	3
	Total Semester Credit Hours	14

5th Semester

HIT 231	Medical Coding Systems Lab I	1
HIT 232	Medical Coding Systems II	3
HIT 235	Medical Coding Systems II	2
HIT 255	Principles of Supervision in HIT	3
	Total Semester Credit Hours	9

6th Semester

HIT 236	Medical Coding Systems Lab	1
HIT 254	Organizational Improvement	3
HIT 286	Expanded Medical Coding	2
HIT 296	Professional Practice Simulations	2
HIT 292	Exam Review	2
	Total Semester Credit Hours	10
TOTAL CREDIT HOURS		**76**

NOTE: *With the exception of HIT 110 Medical Terminology, all courses with the HIT prefix must be completed at WSCC.*
NOTE: *Curriculum is currently under review. Please contact program personnel for advisement.*

*ORI 110 (Freshman Seminar) is a college requirement not a requirement of a specific program. You are exempt from Freshman Seminar if you are a transfer student with a minimum of 12 semester hours of college work or if you were enrolled at WSCC before Fall 2004. ORI 110 is required for incoming freshmen in all divisions.
**BIO 103 is a pre-requisite at WSCC to BIO 201 and 202. This is a college requirement not a program requirement.