**Professional Certificate Approval Program (PCAP) – Self Study Template**

This document is intended to serve as a tool and guide for medical coding certificate programs to organize and prepare documentation under the official online PCAP application process.

Note that:

* Completing the Self Study document does not constitute a submitted application
* Although this entire Self Study document (except for pages 2-3 below) does not need to be submitted with your online PCAP application, it will make it easier for you to complete your online PCAP application because information can be “copy & pasted” from this file directly into your SmarterSelect online PCAP application

Each section of the *PCAP Self Study Template* below (**I. – XVI.**) provides detailed instructions and descriptions of what is required/expected to be submitted as part of the official SmarterSelect online PCAP application. Additional guidance can be found in the *PCAP Manual* and the *PCAP Coding Certificate Competencies*. All 3 documents are intended to collectively serve as guidelines to inform the PCAP application process.

# 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.

# Application for Approval

# Print pages 2-3 below. Complete, sign, and scan those two pages as a separate file for submission with your online PCAP application.

Professional Certificate Approval Program (PCAP)

**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 Program (“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 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 THE DECISION AS TO WHETHER THE PROGRAM QUALIFIES FOR APPROVAL RESTS SOLELY AND EXCLUSIVELY WITH THE PCAP AND 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

# Standard: Administration

Complete each section of this document entirely.

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

# 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 in the development, continuous assessment and revision of the program goals and curriculum. The advisory body is charged with ensuring program responsiveness to changes in the industry. If a program is both CAHIIM and PCAP approved, it may share an advisory body. However, there should be evidence in the meeting minutes that both programs were discussed.

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.

# Standard: Fair Practices

Standard:

The PCAP expects the program and sponsoring institution to promote Fair Practices 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.

### What is the program admission policy?

### 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).

### How are student/faculty/instructor grievances handled in a consistent process according to an established protocol, and how are they communicated to affected parties?

### What is the process for student withdrawal and refunds of tuition/fees?

### 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.

# 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 the program is/will be promoted as a coding certificate program. If appropriate, please provide the web link for verification.

# 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 less than one year, only the current year budget summary is required). For programs that are both CAHIIM and PCAP approved, a single budget 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/or 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?

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

Standard:

Faculty and course support staff (instructors, content/instructional 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, faculty and faculty teaching in the coding program as well as the instructional designers for all coding program courses.
* A document with the CVs of the Program Director and faculty teaching in the coding program as well as the instructional designers for all coding program courses, (All CVs should be copied and pasted into a single document for upload).
* Include a faculty roster and the courses they teach.

Evidence:

* Provide comments regarding how sufficient instructional staff is 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.

# Standard: Curriculum Plan & Methodology

Standard:The program must demonstrate that the curriculum meets or exceeds the course content required to achieve the student learning outcomes/competencies. See the Coding Certificate Program Competencies document for details.

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

The curriculum must be based on the curriculum competencies and curricular considerations and demonstrate how the appropriate knowledge base is obtained. Each program will complete a program self assessment to identify assignments, activities, lessons, exams, PPE and other activities used to achieve the required learning outcomes.

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 Program self assessment 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 curriculum 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.

# Standard: Curriculum Content: Life Sciences

Standard:

Refer to PCAP Manual for Life Science Curriculum Requirements

Files to be attached:

FOR EACH REQUIRED LIFE SCIENCES CLASS (Anatomy and Physiology, Medical Terminology, and Pathophysiology and pharmacology (or combined course):

* 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 – Each syllabus 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. The course calendar is critical to show the content included each week of instruction.

Evidence:

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

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

Standard:

Refer to the PCAP Manual for Clinical Coding and Classification (Diagnostic & Procedural) Curriculum Requirements.

Files to be attached

FOR EACH CLINICAL CODING AND CLASSIFICATION COURSE:

* Two (2) examples of coding skill practice labs for each coding class offered. Coding skill practice lab examples should clearly show/demonstrate that students are actually coding patient case scenarios. Combine all coding skill practice lab examples into a single file before uploading and label each example with the course number and assignment title.
  + One such example of a coding skill practice lab may be a group of one or more coding exercises assigned from an AHIMA coding textbook, such as *Clinical Coding Workout*, in which students are asked to code the conditions within the scenarios and provide the assigned codes to their instructor for grading and feedback.
  + Another example of a coding skill practice lab may be a group of one or more of the authentic Patient Cases assigned and available on the AHIMA Virtual Lab™, in which students are asked to code the conditions within the Patient Cases and provide the assigned codes to their instructor for grading and feedback.
* 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 curricular competencies, 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.

# Standard: Curriculum Content – Reimbursement Methodologies

Standard:

Refer to PCAP Manual for Reimbursement Methodologies Curriculum Requirements.

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 Reimbursement Methodologies.

# Standard: Curriculum Content - Health Information and Delivery Systems

Standard:

Refer to the PCAP Manual for the Health Information and Delivery Systems Curriculum Requirements

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 Health Information and Delivery Systems.

# Standard: Curriculum Content – Legal and Compliance

Standard:

Refer to the PCAP Manual for Legal and Compliance Curriculum Requirements

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 Legal and Compliance.

# Standard: Curriculum Content: Professional Practice Experience (PPE)

Standard:Refer to the PCAP Manual for PPE Requirements.

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.

# 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 – for new programs this may include just the students who have graduated since the inception of the program, for programs continuing approval it should include evidence of the satisfaction survey results over the past three years.
* 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 distribution and collection of satisfaction surveys.