

Professional Practice Experience (PPE) Supervisor Guide

Tacoma Community College
Health Information Technology (HIT) AAS Program



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PPE Supervisor Guide

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Thank you for collaborating with TCC's Health Information programs and participating in the PPE/Internship experience. We appreciate your commitment to students and the HIM profession.

Program Mission Statement

The TCC Health Information Programs are committed to providing students with meaningful and relevant learning in the field of health information management by engaging in collaborative relationships with local and global communities in the HIM profession.

Program Vision Statement

The TCC Health Information programs provide access to quality higher education by promoting the growth of RHIT and RHIA prepared HIM professionals. Through education, we strive to strengthen the position of HIM in the community through innovative teaching methodologies and delivery formats.

Program Values

- Create a learning environment that supports the needs of future and present HIM professionals.
- Promote an environment that recognizes and values the diversity of our students.
- Utilize technology to improve student success in the HIM profession.
- Cultivate local and global affiliations that advance HIM professionals and the HIM profession.
- Foster a desire for professional and personal growth
- Recognize the importance of the public's right to accurate and confidential health information.
- Promote adherence to AHIMA's Code of Ethics.
- Advance awareness of the HIM profession to the community.

Defining the TCC HIT Program PPE Experience

Health care delivery has changed dramatically and continues to change rapidly. With the increased complexity of health care environments, there is a need to provide professional experiences that assist students and graduates to make the transition to the work setting with realistic expectations and maximal preparation.

The TCC HIT AAS program Professional Practice Experience (PPE) is an 80 hour applied, culminating experience in which the student observes and participates in HIM department functions and/or assumes responsibility for a special project as a Health Information professional. Selected activities or projects can be accomplished through multiple communication modes and may be presented face to face, virtually, or through other methods.

This supervised PPE can take place through the Health Information department of a hospital or non-acute healthcare facility, a government agency, an insurance company, a software vendor, or other non-traditional healthcare organizations. Students will work under the supervision of a qualified HIM or other healthcare professional.

During the PPE Experience, the healthcare site will expose the student to practical

experience in Health Information competencies and domains that focus on skill building and practical application of theory. Students are expected to work closely with PPE Site staff to increase their clinical skills, knowledge, competence, and confidence. This will give the student an opportunity to see day-to-day operations and learn about the practical side of healthcare.

The student will benefit by:

1. Gaining an appreciation of the complexity of healthcare
2. Gaining in depth knowledge of a real-world organization
3. Understanding other parts of the organization
4. Networking with a variety of healthcare professionals

The PPE is a credit-based course, which applies toward degree completion, and requires tuition, fees, and costs as normally occurs according to institutional policy. Completing a PPE is not only a vital part of the HIT program curriculum; the program's accrediting body, CAHIIM, also requires it.

Organizations with AHIMA-credentialed staff are eligible to claim 5 CEUs for providing onsite mentorship and supervision of students. The student's daily time sheet is used to vet the involvement of the credentialed member.

A contractual arrangement (affiliation agreement) between the college and the healthcare organization is required to be in place before a student can begin working as an intern. If an agreement is not already in place one must be developed.

The program reserves the right to evaluate the appropriateness of a PPE site to ensure students are placed into a secure and productive environment that furthers their education.

Students Are Not to Replace a Paid Employee

The purpose of the clinical experiences is to fulfill curriculum requirements for a degree, expose the Health Information student to the profession and specific tasks that correlate to courses, and preparing the next generation of Health Information professionals. It is Health Information professionals' ethical obligation to share their knowledge with students and supervise the clinical learning experiences. Students should be exposed, taught, and guided during clinical experiences to learn the Health Information functions. Students should not be used as a replacement of staff to work on Health Information functions that are backlogged due to staff shortage. Terminology that addresses this issue may be in the legal agreement

PPE Supervisor Responsibilities

The PPE Supervisor should be a credentialed or experienced health information practitioner who has demonstrated academic preparation and experience to serve as the coordinator and evaluator for the student's PPE Experience. The PPE Supervisor may assign activities to other credentialed or experienced mentors; however, the overall supervision of the PPE Experience is the responsibility of the PPE Supervisor.

Key Responsibilities:

- Coordinate and review affiliation agreement with appropriate site and college staff
- Prepare student activities with a goal exposing the student to as many areas identified in the HIM Competencies section as possible
- Identify appropriate mentors to guide the student in various activities
- Coordinate schedules with student, mentors and supervisors
- Assign a back-up PPE Supervisor if you are not available
- Facilitate organizational and/or departmental orientation on or before the students first day
- Identify and reserve a space for the student to work (on-site) as needed
- Introduce the student and allow him/her to become part of the team
- Invite the student to observe departmental and/or organizational meetings
- Schedule time to review student's work, answer questions and provide mentorship
- Give constructive feedback to the student regularly
- Sign the student's PPE Timesheet
- Evaluate the student's performance at the end of the PPE Experience
- If appropriate, provide the student with a letter of recommendation

PPE Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to present in a professional manner, be prepared to apply knowledge, ask appropriate questions, and learn from their PPE Experience by:

- Demonstrating professional conduct throughout the PPE Experience
- Coordinating working days/times and other details with the PPE Supervisor before the first day.
- Communicating any absence or tardiness to the PPE Supervisor in a professional and timely manner.
- Staying at the PPE Site until the end of an assigned time unless otherwise released.
- Adhering to the PPE site dress code
- Always wearing an identification badge in accordance with PPE site policy.
- Demonstrating initiative by completing activities as assigned, and asking for additional activities if finished early.
- Demonstrating curiosity and willingness to learn.
- Adhering to all appropriate Codes of Ethics, Standards, and site policies and procedures
- Being cognizant of professional titles used in the setting (Ex: Doctor, Mr./Mrs.)
- Avoiding gossiping or complaining
- Discussing any issues with the PPE Supervisor and the course instructor
- Documenting hours spent on the PPE Timesheet and requesting signature by PPE Supervisor
- Being receptive to constructive feedback
- Appreciating the time and effort of the PPE Supervisor and others in developing and coordinating the PPE Experience.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How do I get a student intern?

Contact the PPE Coordinator or the Program Chair as soon as possible. The PPE Coordinator will begin preparing for spring quarter internships in January.

What is an affiliation agreement?

Affiliation agreements are contracts established between the college and the PPE site to define the conditions for accepting a student intern in the workplace. Most have standardized language that outline the expectations of both the college and the organization. Topics such as proof of immunizations, criminal background checks, HIPAA training are outlined in the agreement. The PPE Coordinator can provide a copy of the affiliation agreement at any time.

How many hours is the PPE Experience?

The TCC HIT AAS degree program requires that PPE experiences are 80 hours in length for most students. Students who have substantial Health Information industry experience may request pre-approval from the course instructor to reduce the required number of hours.

Can we provide a PPE Experience for a student who is also an employee?

Students can complete a PPE experience at their place of employment within the following guidelines.

- The PPE experience must be completed outside of the student's regular job duties
- The PPE Supervisor should not be the student's direct supervisor

How is the PPE Experience scheduled?

The TCC PPE Coordinator will assign each student to an individual PPE Site and will share contact information with both the student and the PPE Supervisor.

The student will be instructed to contact the PPE Supervisor to coordinate scheduling.

However, students may not actually begin their PPE experience until they have provided TCC the following:

- Proof of Immunizations
- Criminal Background Check
- Confidentiality Agreement
- Consent to Release Information

If the PPE Site has additional onboarding requirements, the TCC PPE Coordinator will assist to ensure the student completes these processes before beginning the PPE experience.

When does the PPE Experience Occur?

The TCC HIT AAS program's PPE experience is always scheduled for Spring quarter. This is usually the beginning of April through mid-June.

AHIMA CEU's for PPE Experience Participation

The time spent coordinating and mentoring a student can count toward maintenance of AHIMA CEUs in accordance with CCHIIM standards. An individually credentialed member can claim one (1) CEU for every 60 minutes of direct contact with the student, up to a maximum of five (5) CEUs per year (or 10 CEUs per two year cycle) for work performed with Health Information students. CEUs reflect

personal effort from the credentialed member to help a student in his/her PPE Experience and apply to every AHIMA credentialed staff member who works with the student.

How to Claim AHIMA CEU Credit

At the end of the PPE Experience, the course instructor must receive a completed Student Evaluation from the PPE Supervisor and completed PPE Time Sheet from the student. Upon receipt of the evaluation and the time sheet, the course instructor will provide a CEU form and a copy of the time sheet to the PPE Supervisor. The PPE Supervisor will then distribute the CEU form to any other AHIMA credentialed individuals who worked with the student.

PPE Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this class, the student will be able to:

1. Apply policies, procedures, and regulations related to the management of information, and Information Governance.
2. Apply strategies to protect health information and comply with regulations.
3. Utilize technologies related to the management of health information, informatics and analytics.
4. Apply guidelines, policies, and procedures for the assignment of diagnostic and procedural codes and the management of revenue cycle.
5. Adhere to legal processes, policies and procedures to demonstrate compliance with external forces.
6. Apply leadership skills to inter-professional relationships, change management, performance improvement, financial management and other aspects of organizational management and leadership.

Program Contact Information

HIT Professor and PPE/Internship Coordinator

Dona Aubrey, BS, RHIT
(Phone) 253-460-3813
(Email) daubrey@tacomacc.edu



Health Information Program Chair

Corinne Jarvis, M.Ed, RHIA, CHDA
(Phone) 253-566-5077
(Email) cjarvis@tacomacc.edu



HIM Competencies

The following section is a course assignment each student must submit at the conclusion of his or her PPE Experience. PPE Supervisors are requested to assist students successfully respond to the assignment prompts in relation to policies and processes at the PPE site.

HIT 255 - HIM Competencies Assignment

The purpose of this HIM Competencies Assignment is to provide a mechanism for HIT AAS students to demonstrate knowledge gained during their PPE/Internship experience.

Instructions:

For students completing a regular PPE/Internship Experience:

Complete the following Learning Activities by providing fully developed and detailed responses. Upload this completed document and any additional documents as instructed to the Canvas assignment by the assigned due date.

- Competency 1
- Competency 2
- Competency 3
- Competency 4
- Competency 5
- Competency 6

For students completing a Special Project PPE/Internship through an Employer.

(Must have instructor permission)

Complete the following Learning Activities by providing fully developed and detailed responses. Upload this completed document and any additional documents as instructed to the Canvas assignment by the assigned due date.

- Competency 1
- Competency 2
- Competency 3, 4, or 5 (choose the one that most closely relates to the special project)
- Competency 6
- Competency 7

Competency 1 – Department/Facility Information

Articulate the services and functions provided by the facility and department and how the department fits into the structure of the organization.

Learning Activities

1.1: Describe the type of facility, its location, size, and the services it offers.

1.2: Describe the department your PPE/Internship is coordinated through. Include the department name and each of the department's primary functions.

1.3: Upload the following to the Canvas assignment separately from this document:

- An organizational chart showing where the department fits into the larger organization. (create one if needed)
- An organizational chart showing the structure of the department including management, supervisory and all staff positions. (create one if needed)

1.4: What is the management philosophy/style of the department Manager or Supervisor?

1.5: For each of the department's primary functions, describe its goals for these functions, and how the department strives to achieve them.

1.6: Create a workflow diagram for at least 2 of the department's primary functions and upload them to the Canvas assignment. (Example department functions might be: record completion, release of information, coding, etc.)

- Each diagram must show how the work is completed from start to finish in a step-by-step process.
- Each diagram must use appropriate workflow symbols and shapes.
- Example workflow diagram Tutorial: (Using Lucidchart is not required)
<https://www.lucidchart.com/pages/tutorial/workflow-diagram>

1.7: Describe any productivity standards within the department.

- What are the productivity standards?
- How is the productivity measured?
- Why are the standards set at the level they are set at?

1.8: How does the department interact with other areas of the organization?

1.9: What Code of Ethics does the department expect employees to adhere to and why.

Competency 2 – The Health Record

Articulate how the health record begins, flows through the system, and ends within the department/facility/organization.

Learning Activities:

2.1: Write a detailed description of the flow of a health record, from admission to discharge including all departments that may be involved in the record.

2.2: Describe the format of the health record including:

- The type (paper, hybrid, electronic)
- How the health record forms are created and managed (both digital and paper)
- How paper documents are managed and incorporated into the record.

2.3: Describe how transcribed reports are created and processed into the record.

2.4: Write a detailed description of the record deficiency/chart auditing process

2.5: Describe 3 different forms used within the record; their purpose, what information is captured, and who would provide or input the information on the form.

Competency 3 – Coding, Billing and Reimbursement

Describe the coding, billing and reimbursement processes.

Learning Activities

3.1: Describe the coding process including the following:

- Who does the coding (employees, contractors, outsourcing, other)
- Where is the coding completed at? (onsite, at home, outsourced, etc.)
- What credentials do the coders have?
- What training/education to the coders receive?
- What productivity requirements must the coders meet?
- How are coders audited?

3.2: If you had an opportunity to do hands-on coding, describe your experience and what you learned from it.

3.3: Describe how coding impacts the DNFB and the facilities bottom line.

3.4: Describe any efforts to improve clinical documentation (CDI)

3.5: Describe the billing and denial process.

3.6: Summarize the typical reimbursement challenges encountered and how they are addressed.

Competency 4 - Compliance & Law

Describe legal and compliance policies and procedures.

Learning Activities

4.1: Describe policies and procedures to ensure coding compliance.

4.2: Describe policies and procedures to ensure compliance with documentation standards.

4.3: Describe policies and procedures to ensure compliance with privacy and security rules.

4.4: Describe actions that take place if the facility notes a compliance concern related to coding or documentation.

4.5: Describe actions that take place if there is a compliance breach related to privacy and security.

4.6: Describe the Release of Information (ROI) process from the point of request to the point of release including any productivity standards and auditing.

4.7: Describe HIPAA training for the department/ facility.

4.8: Which accrediting body surveys this facility? Describe the department's role in the survey.

4.9: Write at least one paragraph to respond to the following prompts:

- Describe the role of the compliance or privacy officer. (interview this person if possible)
- Describe the role of the corporate compliance department (interview someone in this department if possible)

Competency 5 - Registries

Describe registries and reporting mechanisms utilized.

Learning Activities

5.1: Describe the Master Patient Index (MPI) at the facility.

5.2: Write at least one paragraph to respond to the following prompts:

5.3: Describe the role of a cancer, trauma or other registrar (interview this person if possible)

5.4: Describe the role of vital statistics reporting (birth, death, etc.) (interview this person if possible).

5.5: Describe the process of physician/provider credentialing.

5.6: Describe the process of reporting mandatory diseases to the health department.

Competency 6 – PPT Presentation & Student Experience Survey

Conclusion and final evaluation meeting with Instructor

Learning Activities

6.1: Prepare a short Power Point presentation to conclude your PPE/Internship experience and schedule a time with your instructor to present it. Upload the Power Point to the Canvas assignment. The Power Point should include the following:

- Summary of the overall experience
- What was your biggest takeaway from the PPE experience?
- What went well or better than expected and why?
- How will you apply what you learned in your future career?
- What would you recommend for future students as they are preparing for their internships and why?
- Other comments about your experience

6.2: Complete the PPE Student Experience Survey

LINK: [PPE Student Experience Survey](#)

Competency 7 – Special Projects

For students with substantial HIM experience who complete a pre-approved special project through their employer.

Learning Activities

7.1: Complete and submit the learning activities for the following Competencies

- Competency 1
- Competency 2
- Either Competency 3, 4, or 5 (choose one that best aligns with the project)
- Competency 6

7.2: Complete and submit the Special Project Outline document.

Student Preparation

The following is information provided to students in preparation for their PPE Experience.

Assignment of PPE Sites

The course instructor will assign each student to a PPE site. Prior to receiving their site assignment, each student will need to complete a demographics survey and identify his or her site preferences. The course instructor will match students to sites as best as possible based upon site availability, student location and preferences.

Students who live outside of the Tacoma/Seattle area bear the primary responsibility of locating a PPE site in their local area. Close coordination with the PPE Coordinator will be necessary to ensure the site meets program requirements and an affiliation agreement is in place. It is recommended that the student begin this process in January to be ready for the PPE experience in April.

Required Number of PPE Hours

The HIT program requires 80 documented hours of PPE experience. The PPE time may be spread out throughout the quarter in any way agreed upon between the student and the PPE Supervisor. PPE hours are to be completed during regular business hours (Monday – Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm) Currently employed students may need to take time off to participate in a PPE experience.

Students Employed by a Healthcare Organization

A PPE experience completed at a student's place of employment must adhere to the following guidelines.

- The PPE experience must be completed outside of the students' regular job duties
- The PPE Supervisor should not be the students' direct supervisor
- The PPE site will determine if the student will need to undergo normal internship placement onboarding processes

Students with Substantial HIM Industry Experience

Students with substantial HIM industry experience may request pre-approval from the course instructor to modify their PPE in such a way to ensure a positive learning experience.

Modification options include:

- Reduction of required number of PPE hours
- Completion of a special project through the students' employer

The student must request a consultation with the course instructor prior to the beginning of spring quarter to discuss options.

Preparing for the PPE Experience

Students will need to prepare for their PPE experience well in advance of their site assignment. It is recommend that students gather their documents at least 8 weeks prior to the beginning of spring quarter.

Immunization Requirements

Each student must provide the following proof of immunizations prior to participation in the PPE experience.

- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)
- Varicella (Chicken Pox)
- Tetanus, Diphtheria & Pertussis (Tdap)
 - Must be documentation of a Tdap booster within the past 10 years
- Tuberculous (TB) Test – can be either:
- QuantiFERON GOLD Blood Test
 - 2-step PPD (1-3 weeks apart)
- Influenza (current season)*
- COVID-19*

***The program does not determine if a PPE site will accept an exception for Influenza or COVID vaccines. Students must initiate communication to their assigned site to discuss possible exemption. If the PPE site does not allow exemption, and the student does not wish to proceed with the placement, the student will be responsible for locating his/her own PPE site.**

What does proof of immunization look like?

Accepted proof of immunization is either proof of vaccination, a positive Antibody Titer, or proof of TB testing.

Proof of immunization documentation must be from a medical clinic or pharmacy.

Documentation should include student name, DOB, name and date of vaccine administration, date of a blood titer and results, date of TB testing and results.

Immunization/Vaccine Tips

Do not wait!

If it has been more than 10 years since your MMR, Varicella, Tdap, you may need to receive a booster. If you cannot locate verification of each immunization immediately, we recommend scheduling an appointment with your physician to request an Antibody Titer blood test right away. If your Antibody Titer result is negative (no immunity), then you will need to receive the vaccines.

Take note of the vaccine schedule as per the CDC.

- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)
 - 2 doses at least 28 days apart
- Varicella (Chicken Pox)
 - 2 doses at least 28 days apart
- Tetanus, Diphtheria & Pertussis (Tdap)
 - Required every 10 years

Proof of Health Insurance

Each student must provide proof of health insurance. Documentation such as an insurance card or policy statement is acceptable.

If the student does not have health insurance, TCC may be able to refer the student to a low-cost insurance plan.

Criminal Background Check

Each student must complete a criminal background check through a TCC contracted vendor at the student's expense. Any result found on the background check is reported to the PPE site and the site will have the option to decline the student.

The program will provide a web page and code for students to access the background check.

Some PPE sites will require a second background check such as the WA Access to Criminal History (WATCH) report at the student's expense.

Drug Testing

Some PPE sites will require students to consent to a drug screen test at the student's expense before beginning their PPE experience. If this is required, the student will be notified during the onboarding process for the PPE site.

Although recreational marijuana is legal in the state of Washington, most PPE sites adhere to federal regulations. Students are advised to refrain from using recreational drugs, tobacco, or some prescription medications that may adversely affect drug-testing policies.

Placement Service Partners

Some PPE sites collaborate with a third-party placement service organization to facilitate a standardized set of requirements and onboarding practices. If assigned to a PPE site that uses a third-party placement partner, the student will be required to register with and pay a fee to the placement partner.

Costs of PPE Site Placement

The following costs are approximate and will vary from student to student.

- Immunizations (prices vary)
- Criminal Background Check (\$72)
- WA Access to Criminal History (WATCH) (\$12)
- Drug Testing (\$45-\$85)
- Placement Service Partners (\$25-\$75)

Student Conduct Expectations

All students are required to adhere to the following student conduct expectations.

Attendance

Excessive absenteeism or tardiness will adversely affect the student's grade for the PPE course. While there may be times when a student may be absent due to illness or other valid reasons, it is the student's responsibility to:

- Notify the PPE Supervisor prior to an absence and arrange to make up the missed time.
- Communicate to the PPE Supervisor if running late and provide an estimate arrival time.
- Stay at the PPE site until the end of the assigned time unless otherwise released early.

Professional Communication

Professional behavior and communication is expected at all times during the PPE experience.

- Be cognizant of professional titles used in the setting (Ex: Doctor Smith, Mrs. Smith)
- Always maintain professional relationships with PPE site staff.
- Avoid gossiping or complaining with site staff or other students.
- If there are any issues, they should be discussed with the PPE Supervisor and the course instructor

Appearance

Students should:

- Practice professionalism by presenting a professional appearance
- Adhere to the PPE site's dress code
- Be aware of personal hygiene such as strong perfumes/colognes, tobacco odors, and deodorant issues when working in close proximity with other staff
- Always wear an identification badge in accordance with PPE site policy
- If any questions about proper attire, discuss with PPE Supervisor or course instructor

General Conduct

Students should:

- Demonstrate professional conduct throughout the PPE Experience
- Demonstrate initiative by completing activities as assigned
- Ask appropriate questions for clarification as needed
- Complete PPE activities and assignments early, asking for additional work rather than waiting for the PPE Supervisor to noticed
- Do not use cell phones during working hours, including texting
- Web access should be limited to the scope assigned by the PPE Site
- Ethics and confidentiality:
 - Adhere to [AHIMA's Code of Ethics](#)
 - Adhere to [AHIMA's Standards of Ethical Coding](#)
 - Abide by [TCC's Code of Student Conduct](#)
 - Abide by the PPE Sites policies and procedures
 - Abide by HIPAA and other regulations, as appropriate.