HT 2500D
Health Information Technology Practicum

HANDBOOK AND REQUIREMENTS GUIDE
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INTRODUCTION
This guide summarizes the practicum requirements for the Health Information Technology Program. This document serves as a guide for students, site directors, and faculty, to assist in providing a valuable practicum experience.

The Profession
Health Information Technology (HIT) is a rapidly changing field. The direction of the healthcare industry involves advancements in technology, reimbursement operations and regulation. Health information functions are being transformed to a world of eHIM and paperless environments. A graduate of a HIT program must possess the knowledge and theory necessary to understand and adapt to these rapidly changing times. At a minimum, a student should be prepared to deal effectively with:

- Increasing standardization
- Economic Impact on healthcare facilities
- Improving information technologies
- Increasing volume and detail of data
- Clinical and Business data applications
- Privacy Issues
- Demographic Trends
- Governmental Regulation
- Information Governance
- Productivity Challenges
- Shift from paper to hybrid to the EHR

The University
Mission Statement/Core Values/Purposes
National American University welcomes students of diverse interests, cultures and abilities, and prepares them for careers in health care, business and business-related fields by providing quality higher education in a caring and supportive environment.

The university builds learning partnerships with students and other institutions and organizations locally, nationally and internationally through its private, regionally-accredited system of campuses and education centers offering courses in traditional, accelerated and distance learning formats.

As a comprehensive technical and professional institution of higher learning, the university responds to the changing needs of students, employers, and their communities by providing undergraduate and graduate programs and continuing education opportunities to serve our evolving global society.

Core Values
- Offer high quality instructional programs and services.
- Provide a caring and supportive learning environment.
- Offer technical and professional career programs.
Accreditations/Approvals/Affiliations
National American University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.
University Website  
http://www.national.edu

The Program  
National American University Online introduced the Associate of Applied Science Degree in 2009. NAU’s core values include offering technical, professional career, and high quality instructional programs and services. The program also allows students at any NAU campus to seek a career in health information technology.

The Curriculum  
The role of National American University is to provide the fundamental knowledge, and practical experience needed for adaptive entry-level professional competencies. The HIT Program at NAU provides the following curriculum (99 credits):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MAJOR CORE (48)</th>
<th>GEN ED CORE (51)</th>
<th>COMMUNICATIONS (13.5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAT NO</strong></td>
<td><strong>PREREQ</strong></td>
<td><strong>CR</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HT1000D</strong> Introduction to Health Information Management &amp; Health Care</td>
<td>CS1201</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HT2117D</strong> ICD Coding &amp; Pathophysiology I w/Lab</td>
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<td><strong>HT2127D</strong> ICD Coding &amp; Pathophysiology II w/Lab</td>
<td>HT2117D &amp; SC1224D</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HT2130D</strong> CPT Coding w/Lab</td>
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<td><strong>HT2135D</strong> Advanced Coding w/ Lab</td>
<td>HT2130D</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HT2200D</strong> Health Information Management Systems</td>
<td>HT1000D &amp; CS1300</td>
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<td><strong>HT2210D</strong> Healthcare Data Quality &amp; Management</td>
<td>HT2200D</td>
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<td><strong>HT2230D</strong> Healthcare Reimbursement</td>
<td>HT2127D</td>
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<td><strong>HT2400D</strong> Health Information Management &amp; Supervision</td>
<td>HT2210D</td>
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<td><strong>HT2250D</strong> Medical Law and Ethics for Health Information Professionals</td>
<td>HT1000D &amp; EN1300</td>
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<td><strong>HT2500D</strong> Health Information Technology Practicum</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ME1140</strong> Medical Terminology for Health Professions</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Placement recommendation  
① HT1000D (or co-requisite). ME1140 & SC1221
② Program coordinator or chair approval & completion of all major core courses except HT2130D.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEN ED CORE (51)</th>
<th>Communications (13.5)</th>
<th><strong>CAT NO</strong></th>
<th><strong>PREREQ</strong></th>
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<th><strong>EARNED</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EN1150</strong> Composition I</td>
<td>EN1000*</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EN1130</strong> Composition II</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EN2100</strong> Speech OR Interpersonal Professional Communication</td>
<td>EN1150 (EN2150 Only)</td>
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<td><strong>SCIENCE (12)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SC1211</strong> Essentials of Anatomy and Physiology with Lab</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SC1224D</strong> Advanced Essentials of Anatomy &amp; Physiology with Lab</td>
<td>SC1221</td>
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<td><strong>MATHEMATICS (4.5)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MA2000</strong> Quantitative Reasoning</td>
<td>CS1301</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<td><strong>HUMANITIES (4.5)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HU2000</strong> Critical Thinking &amp; Problem Solving</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BEHAVIORAL/SOCIAL SCIENCE (4.5)</strong></td>
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**GENERAL EDUCATION (12)**  
- **CS1201** Juggling College, Life, and Career: Set Up for Success  
- **CS1301** Do the Numbers! Achieving College and Career Success  
- **CS2080** Career Path Planning  

*Transfer students with an associate degree or 60 or more quarter credits are not required to complete CS1201 and CS1301. CS1410 or CS1420 may serve in place of either course or as an open elective.
Program Mission
The Health Information Technology program is designed to provide students with a solid foundation in analytical, technical and management skills associated with health information. Through practical approaches and professional domains, students will acquire the essential entry-level competencies to support the principles and management of health information and technologies.

Program Description
The Health Information Technology occupation is one of the fastest growing professions in one of the fastest growing industries. Health information professionals provide reliable and valid information that drives healthcare. Health information technicians are specialists in managing medical records, coding and reimbursement, and possess the skills to critically think and problem solve. These professionals play a key role in preparing, analyzing and maintaining health records and are considered experts in assuring the privacy and security of health data.

The health information field is increasingly focusing on electronic patient records, database management and information privacy and security. They work in a variety of settings, such as hospitals, physician practices, long-term care, home healthcare, insurance, managed care, health technology firms and pharmaceutical companies.

The Role of the Practicum
NAU recognizes the importance of knowledge and theory, however, also values the need to successfully translate theory into practice. This process is the role of the practicum experience. The practicum facilitates classroom theory into practical application and better prepares the student to enter the workforce.

The practicum supports the students’ need to demonstrate competencies that contribute to the profession of Health Information Technology. The site director becomes a primary factor in this transition. The site director is a teacher, mentor and guide. The site director works with NAU to assist the student in developing professionalism and a life-long pursuit of learning.

Program Goals
The program will:
- Provide the knowledge to meet entry-level HIT learning competencies.
- Provide students with the fundamental knowledge to collect, analyze, and maintain health information.
- Provide students with an understanding of the ethical and regulatory issues within the health information management profession.
- Provide students with an understanding of current laws, accreditation, licensure, and certification standards related to health information.
- Provide the knowledge to apply basic skills in technology and application software to ensure appropriate use, storage and retrieval of health information.
- Provide the basic skills for coding diagnoses and procedures.
- Provide students with the necessary skills to develop oral and written communication skills.
Student Learning Outcomes

The graduates of the program will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge to collect, analyze, and maintain health record content.
2. Apply healthcare laws, regulations and ethics to the process of releasing medical information.
3. Demonstrate accurate coding skills and utilization of coding software.
4. Apply knowledge of accreditation and licensing standards.
5. Demonstrate basic skills in performance improvement, total quality management and quality assurance activities.
6. Demonstrate skills in the entry and retrieval of health information, using an electronic record system or imaging record technology.
7. Support healthcare data analysis and management using applications software.
8. Use database tools to manage health data and information.
9. Demonstrate an understanding of the healthcare billing and reimbursement process.
10. Demonstrate skill in organizing and supporting administrative activities.
11. Show proficiency in written and oral communication.

Accreditation Status

The health information technology program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM). Accreditation allows program graduates to be eligible to take the certification examination offered by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) to become a Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT). For additional information on current program status, email the Program Chair at healthinformation@national.edu.
THE PRACTICUM

Practicum Guide
The guide contains the practicum requirements for the Associate of Applied Science Degree at National American University Online. It serves as a handbook for students, site directors, and faculty to provide the best practicum experience.

Course Description
The practicum is designed to allow students to participate in a supervised setting to gain practice experience in a health information department or other approved practice setting or organization. Through the application of concepts and theories, student will demonstrate skills in record retrieval, data abstraction and analysis are practiced; knowledge of record retention and release of information; application of coding skills and observation of supervisory and planning activities. Students will prepare a written report of their practical learning experience.

Pre-requisite: Academic advisor approval and completion of, or current enrollment in all other courses in program.

Course Objectives
Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Apply healthcare laws, regulations and ethics to the process of releasing medical information.

   Knowledge and skills leading to the mastery of this competency:
   a. Discuss laws and regulations for the confidentiality of patient information.
   b. Describe common policies and procedures for release of information.
   c. Review a request for health information and fulfill according to process for release.
   d. Describe procedures to fill subpoena request for records.
   e. Prepare a report of release of information policies and procedures.
   f. Apply ethical principles in handling patient information.

2. Apply accurate coding skills.

   Knowledge and skills leading to the mastery of this competency:
   a. Use coding conventions to assign principal and secondary diagnoses and procedures.
   b. Use coding software to assign codes.
   c. Use database to enter information from abstracted records.
   d. Perform an audit of coding accuracy.

3. Apply accreditation and licensing standards.

   Knowledge and skills leading to the mastery of this competency:
   a. Identify accreditation standards that apply to health information management.
   b. Perform a compliance audit for accreditation standards.
c. Discuss the importance of mortality and morbidity statistics in relation to accreditation standards.
d. Prepare a delinquent record report.

4. Use an electronic record system or imaging technology to enter and retrieve health information.

Knowledge and skills leading to the mastery of this competency:
a. Perform a review of a health record storage system.
b. Prepare a report on the status of implementing an electronic health record (EHR) or imaging technology.
c. Use an electronic record system or imaging technology to process health records.
d. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of electronic records and/or document imaging.
e. Identify components of document imaging technology.
f. Identify components of an electronic health record.

5. Apply principles of the healthcare billing and reimbursement process.

Knowledge and skills leading to the mastery of this competency:
a. Outline the steps of billing procedures and claims processing.
b. Examine payment and billing information.
c. Identify the role of the health information management in the maintenance of the billing and reimbursement.
d. Discuss the purpose of the chargemaster.
e. Use software to support the chargemaster.

6. Apply skills in organizing and supporting administrative activities.

Knowledge and skills leading to the mastery of this competency:
a. Prepare an agenda.
b. Use word processing software to prepare meeting minutes.
c. Outline responsibilities for planning and conducting meetings.
d. Discuss common meetings that involve health information management.
e. Identify ways where meetings are used as communication tools.
f. Use presentation software to present on a health information management-related topic.

7. Apply basic skills in quality management and quality assurance activities.

Knowledge and skills leading to the mastery of this competency:
a. Evaluate compliance with quality standards
b. Identify ways in which a quality management plan applies to accreditation standards. Explain the relationship between risk management and quality improvement efforts.
c. Identify roles for health information management professionals in supporting risk management and quality assurance activities.
d. Identify quality assessment activities and impact on an overall quality improvement plan.
e. Describe criteria that indicate the need for quality assessment.

8. Use database tools to manage health data and information.

Knowledge and skills leading to the mastery of this competency:
   a. Use a health information database to collect data.
   b. Use a health information database to retrieve records
   c. Use a health information database to generate a report.
   d. List the types of hardware and software systems used in health information management.

9. Apply functions of a master patient index (MPI) and other indices to accurately search and retrieve information.

Knowledge and skills leading to the mastery of this competency:
   a. Identify the types of indexes used in health information management.
   b. Discuss the process of entering information into a master patient index.
   c. Discuss risks for duplicate numbers or duplicate patients in the MPI.
   d. Search the MPI and retrieve information.

Placement and Supervision
Students will work with the Program Director and/or Practicum Coordinator to identify an appropriate location for the practicum. The student should take a proactive role in this process and begin thinking about potential sites at least two sessions prior to taking the practicum. A formal letter of agreement between the school and the practicum site, outlining student expectations for the practicum course, must be on file prior to the start of practicum. The student is responsible for making travel arrangements to get to the site and for related expenses. The student should also anticipate that the practicum will be a nonpaid assignment. At the conclusion of the practicum the site director will be asked to complete an evaluation of the student’s performance.

Contact Hours
The student must be scheduled for at least ninety (90) hours of on-site practical activity. The scheduled hours can be arranged by collaborating with the practicum site director, to satisfy the practical exposure. The University allows flexibility in scheduling these hours. The requirement can be met with full days, partial days or consecutive days as agreed upon with the site director.

In addition to the on-site activities, students are also expected to participated in online course activities, and reporting regularly on the practical experience. Instructor and student are to be in contact by phone, if needed.

Ethical Behavior
Students are expected to be professional, including appropriate behavior, attire and communication, at all times. Students will adhere to the AHIMA Code of Ethics. Students will also sign an affiliation agreement, to abide by all the rules and regulations of the affiliation site. The AHIMA Code of Ethics is included in the practicum course.
### AHIMA Entry-Level Competencies
This table can also be used as a checklist for on-site practicum activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Domain: Healthcare Data Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Subdomain: Health Data Structure, Content and Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect and maintain health data (such as data elements, data sets, and databases).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct analysis to ensure documentation in the health record supports the diagnosis and reflects the patient's progress, clinical findings, and discharge status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply policies and procedures to ensure the accuracy of health data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute to the definitions for and apply clinical vocabularies and terminologies used in the organization's health information systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verify timeliness, completeness, accuracy, and appropriateness of data and data sources for patient care, management, billing reports, registries, and/or databases.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Subdomain: Healthcare Information Requirements and Standards |
| Monitor and apply organization-wide health record documentation guidelines. |
| Apply policies and procedures to ensure organizational compliance with regulations and standards. |
| Report compliance findings according to organizational policy. |
| Maintain the accuracy and completeness of the patient record as defined by organizational policy and external regulations and standards. |
Assist in preparing the organization for accreditation, licensing, and/or certification surveys.

**Subdomain: Clinical Classification Systems**

Use and maintain electronic applications and work processes to support clinical classification and coding.

Apply diagnosis/procedure codes using ICD-10-CM.

Apply procedure codes using CPT/HCPCS.

Ensure accuracy of diagnostic/procedural groupings such as DRG, APC, and so on.

Adhere to current regulations and established guidelines in code assignment.

Validate coding accuracy using clinical information found in the health record.

Use and maintain applications and processes to support other clinical classification and nomenclature systems (such as ICD-10-CM, SNOMED, etc.).

Resolve discrepancies between coded data and supporting documentation.

**D. Subdomain: Reimbursement Methodologies**

1. Apply policies and procedures for the use of clinical data required in reimbursement and prospective payment systems (PPS) in healthcare delivery.

2. Support accurate billing through coding, chargemaster, claims management, and bill reconciliation processes.

Use established guidelines to comply with reimbursement and reporting requirements such as the National Correct Coding Initiative.

4. Compile patient data and perform data quality reviews to validate code assignment and compliance with reporting requirements such as outpatient prospective payment systems.
## II. Domain: Health Statistics, Biomedical Research and Quality Management

### A. Subdomain: Healthcare Statistics and Research

- Abstract and maintain data for clinical indices/databases/registries.
- Collect, organize and present data for quality management, utilization management, risk management, and other related studies.
- Compute and interpret healthcare statistics.
- Apply Institutional Review Board (IRB) processes and policies.
- Use specialized databases to meet specific organization needs such as medical research and disease registries.

### B. Subdomain: Quality Management and Performance Improvement

- Abstract and report data for facility-wide quality management and performance improvement programs.
- Analyze clinical data to identify trends that demonstrate quality, safety, and effectiveness of healthcare.

## III. Domain: Health Services Organization and Delivery

### Subdomain: Healthcare Delivery Systems

- Apply information system policies and procedures required by national health information initiatives on the healthcare delivery system.
- Apply current laws, accreditation, licensure, and certification standards related to health information initiatives from the national, state, local and facility levels.

3. Apply policies and procedures to comply with the changing regulations among various payment systems for healthcare services such as Medicare, Medicaid, managed care, and so forth.

4. Differentiate the roles of various providers and disciplines throughout the continuum of healthcare and respond to their information needs.

### B. Subdomain: Healthcare Privacy, Confidentiality, Legal, and Ethical Issues

- Participate in the implementation of legal and regulatory requirements related to the health information infrastructure.

- Apply policies and procedures for access and disclosure of personal health information.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Release patient-specific data to authorized users.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintain user access logs/systems to track access to and disclosure of identifiable patient data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct privacy and confidentiality training programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate and recommend solutions to privacy issues/problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply and promote ethical standards of practice.</td>
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</table>

IV. Domain: Information Technology & Systems

Subdomain: Information and Communication Technologies

Use technology, including hardware and software, to ensure data collection, storage, analysis, and reporting of information.

2. Use common software applications such as spreadsheets, databases, word processing, graphics, presentation, e-mail, and so on in the execution of work processes.

3. Use specialized software in the completion of HIM processes such as record tracking, release of information, coding, grouping, registries, billing, quality improvement, and imaging.

4. Apply policies and procedures to the use of networks, including intranet and Internet applications to facilitate the electronic health record (EHR), personal health record (PHR), public health, and other administrative applications.

Subdomain: Data, Information, and File Structures

1. Apply knowledge of database architecture and design (such as data dictionary, data modeling, data warehousing, and so on) to meet departmental needs.
Subdomain: Data Storage and Retrieval

1. Use appropriate electronic or imaging technology for data/record storage.

2. Query and generate reports to facilitate information retrieval.

3. Design and generate reports using appropriate software.

4. Maintain archival and retrieval systems for patient information stored in multiple formats.

5. Coordinate, use and maintain systems for document imaging and storage.

Subdomain: Data Security

Apply confidentiality and security measures to protect electronic health information.

Protect data integrity and validity using software or hardware technology.

Apply departmental and organizational data and information system security policies.

Use and summarize data compiled from audit trail and data quality monitoring programs.

Contribute to the design and implementation of risk management, contingency planning, and data recovery procedures.

E. Subdomain: Healthcare Information Management

Participate in the planning, design, selection, implementation, integration, testing, evaluation, and support for organization-wide information systems.

Use the principles of ergonomics and human factors in work process design.

V. Domain: Organizational Resources

Subdomain: Human Resources

1. Apply the fundamentals of team leadership.

2. Organize and contribute to work teams and committees.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Site Director Evaluation
Upon completion of the practicum, the site director will be responsible for completing an evaluation of the student's performance. The site director will email the evaluation to the NAU HIT and Coding Program Chair at healthinformation@national.edu. The performance evaluation will be based on the entry-level competencies that correlate to practicum activities. Site directors are encouraged to discuss the evaluation results with the students. Site directors will score students using a rating scale of 0-5 based on his or her observation of the student's application, use, and completion of competency-related tasks. The site director is encouraged to discuss the evaluation with the student during the final week of the practicum experience. The Site Director Evaluation form is included in the practicum course. It is a fillable-PDF document that may be completed, saved and emailed.

Student Evaluation
Upon completion of the practicum, the student will be responsible for completing an evaluation of their experience. Student evaluations will be completed in the online course. Students are expected to discuss evaluation results with site director. The Student Evaluation form is included in the practicum course.

Time On-Site
Students are expected to complete a minimum of 90 hours on-site during the practicum course. A journal of activities and/or status reports should be completed and submitted in the online classroom.

Presentation
In addition to written summary, a presentation summarizing key points of the practicum experience will be provided by the student, by the final week of the session. The PowerPoint Presentation should be an overview of their activities and experiences with a time limit of 7-10 minutes. Students will use the narration function in Microsoft PowerPoint to narrate the presentation. The presentation grade will be a part of the portfolio.

Portfolio
To further support the learning experience, students will be asked to document their practicum experience in a portfolio. At a minimum, the portfolio should include competency checklist, examples of forms and other activity documents, journal, reports and notes and evaluations, and presentation. The portfolio should be well organized and submitted electronically to the instructor.
**Alternative Assignments (Online Course)**
The virtual practicum is a simulated practical experience for students in extenuating circumstances who are unable to attend a physical site. Alternative assignments will not be graded as a stand-alone assignment, but will be graded as part of the completion of competencies in your journaling and the final portfolio. You will submit all assignment results to the **Journal Entry** drop box for that Learning Plan.

**Orientation**
To prepare for the practicum, students will be required to attend an orientation presentation, via online. The NAU Program Chair /Coordinator will coordinate the presentation and provide further information to students regarding scheduling and logistics.

**Organizations That Serve as Affiliation Sites**
Organizations that serve as affiliation sites are varies as many type of employers and facilities employ health information professionals. Sites include:
- Hospitals
- ambulatory clinics
- physician practices
- long-term acute care facilities
- skilled nursing facilities
- home health centers
- hospice centers
- HIM service providers
- insurance companies
- outpatient behavioral health centers
- state agencies
- federal agencies

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**
Affiliation agreements that outline the roles and responsibilities of the healthcare facility, University and student will be signed prior to the start of the practicum. Below is synopsis of the general roles and responsibilities.

**Responsibilities of the University**
- Assure students have met all University eligibility requirements. Define competencies to be addressed during practicum.
- Provide adequate orientation to students and site directors (as needed). Instruct students to abide by site policies and procedures.
- Promptly address issues and concerns, regarding the practicum assignment and student activity.
- Provide evaluation tool to assess student performance.
- Evaluate academic performance of students in the HIT program.

**Responsibilities of the Facility**

- Cooperate with University to promote success of the practicum.
- Notify University of issues with student on-site practicum activities.
- Instruct students on workplace rules and policies.
- Design suitable experience as noted by University curriculum and entry-level competencies.
- Mentor students in professional development.
- Do not use students to replace paid staff.
- Evaluate student performance using University evaluation tool.

**Responsibilities of the Student**

- Attend online practicum orientation.
- Meet eligibility and course requirements.
- Be familiar with all procedures for practicum experience.
- Meet deadline dates for all activities.
- Abide by facility rules and regulations.
- Conduct him/her self in a professional manner during the practicum assignment.
- Accept instruction from facility personnel as a learning opportunity.
- Maintain communication with the site director and instructor.