

**HT 2300D
Health Care
Coding Practicum**

**HANDBOOK
AND
REQUIREMENTS
GUIDE**

Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
The Profession	3
The University	3
Mission Statement/Core Values/Purposes	3
Core Values	3
Accreditations/Approvals/Affiliations	3
The Curriculum	3
Program Mission	5
Program Description	5
The Role of the Practicum	5
Program Goals	5
Student Learning Outcomes	6
THE PRACTICUM	6
Course Description	6
Course Objectives	6
Placement and Supervision	8
Contact Hours	8
Ethical Behavior	8
COURSE REQUIREMENTS	8
Site Director Evaluation	8
Time On- Site	9
Presentation	9
Portfolio	9
Orientation	9
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	9
Organizations That Serve as Sites	10
Responsibilities of the University	10
Responsibilities of the Facility	10
Responsibilities of the Student	10

INTRODUCTION

This guide summarizes the practicum requirements for National American University's Diploma of Health Care Coding Program. This document serves as a guide for students, site directors, and faculty, to assist in providing a valuable practicum experience.

The Profession

Health Care Coding is a field that has consistently grown over the years, and will continue to grow in the years to come. Coders assign the diagnosis and procedures for healthcare services that are provided to patients. A graduate of the Healthcare Coding program must demonstrate general knowledge of healthcare, diseases processes; and have the ability to apply treatment information to the process of assigning medical codes. Students must also possess general knowledge in reimbursement methodologies and claims processing.

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

www.national.edu

The Curriculum

The role of National American University is to provide the fundamental knowledge, and practical experience needed for adaptive entry-level competencies. The Health Care Coding Diploma Program at NAU provides the following curriculum (63 credits):

HEALTHCARE CODING MAJOR CORE (30)

CAT NO		PREREQ	CR	EARNED	CODE
HT1000D*	Introduction to Health Information Management & Health Care	CS1201	4		
HT2117D*	ICD Coding & Pathophysiology I w/Lab	①	6		
HT2127D*	ICD Coding & Pathophysiology II w/Lab	HT2117D & SC1224D	6		
HT2130D*	CPT Coding w/Lab	HT2127D	3		
HT2135D*	Advanced Coding w/ Lab	HT2130D	3		
HT2230D*	Healthcare Reimbursement	HT2127D	3		
HT2300D	Healthcare Coding Practicum	②	3		
ME1140*	Medical Terminology for Health Professions		2		

^ Or placement recommendation

① HT1000D (or co-requisite), ME1140 & SC1221

② Program coordinator or chair approval & completion of all other major core courses except HT2135D

* Professional course (minimum "C" grade required)

GEN ED CORE (33)

COMMUNICATIONS (4.5)

CAT NO		PREREQ	CR	EARNED	CODE
EN1150	Composition I	EN1000^	4.5		

SCIENCE (12)

SC1221*	Essentials of Anatomy and Physiology with Lab		6		
SC1224D*	Advanced Essentials of Anatomy & Physiology with Lab	SC1221	6		

BEHAVIORAL/SOCIAL SCIENCE (4.5)

			4.5		
--	--	--	-----	--	--

GENERAL EDUCATION (12)

CS1201.x	Juggling College, Life, and Career: Set Up for Success!		5		
CS1301.x	Do the Numbers! Achieving College and Career Success	CS1201	5		
CS2086	Career Path Planning	Sophomore Status	2		

xTransfer 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.

PREREQUISITE COURSE (if applicable)

EN1000			4.5		
--------	--	--	-----	--	--

Program Mission

The diploma program in healthcare coding is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of coding principles and standards for entry-level professionals. The program assists students in the interpretation of coding practices, for both inpatient and outpatient settings.

Program Description

There are many demands within health care institutions for coding professionals. Coding skills are highly valued within the healthcare industry, as the information is used in preparing claims for reimbursement, evaluating outcomes, quality assurance activities, and for clinical research. Coding professionals work in a variety of settings, such as hospitals, physician practices, long-term care, home healthcare, insurance, managed care, and governmental agencies.

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 Healthcare Coding. 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 students with an opportunity to develop coding skills through the practices of coding and interpretation of health records.
- Provide a balanced focus on coding in a physician's office and acute care setting for both inpatient and outpatient coding.
- Provide students with the capabilities to identify the importance of coding documentation and its impact on reimbursement.
- Provide students with an understanding of the ethical and regulatory issues in coding practices.
- Provide students with the necessary background in health record content, medical terminology, and disease process.
- Provide students with the necessary skills to develop oral and written communication skills.

Student Learning Outcomes

The graduates of the program will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of standardized terminology, nomenclature, classification systems, and clinical vocabularies.
- Apply understanding of clinical classification systems and clinical vocabularies that support the collection and retrieval of health information.
- Recognize the common use and apply the coding process for the International Classification of Diseases (ICD), Current Procedural Terminology (CPT), Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS), and Evaluation and Management (E/M) coding systems.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history, purpose, structure, content, and uses of coding methodologies.
- Demonstrate a foundational knowledge in the accurate use of encoding software.
- Apply knowledge of fraud and abuse of coding practices and compliance program for unethical practices.
- Demonstrate the importance of quality clinical data and coded information.
- Demonstrate an understanding of coding within the reimbursement and billing processes.
- Show proficiency in written and oral communication.

THE PRACTICUM

Course Description

The practicum is designed to allow students to participate in a supervised setting to gain practice experience in an approved practice setting or organization. Through the application of concepts and theories, students will demonstrate application of coding skills, reimbursement methodologies, 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 concepts of standardized terminology, nomenclature, classification systems, and clinical vocabularies.

Knowledge and skills leading to the mastery of this competency:

- a. Describe major coding systems (ICD-10-CM, ICD-10-PCS, CPT, HCPCS, DSM).
- b. Identify the types of codingsystems.
- c. Define ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS common manual terminology.
- d. Identify symbols and conventions in the ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS manual.
- e. Discuss fundamental diagnosis and procedure guidelines.

2. Apply coding conventions to accurately assign codes to patient records.

Knowledge and skills leading to the mastery of this competency:

- a. Outline the basic steps in the coding process.
 - b. Define principal diagnosis and principle procedure.
 - c. Describe coding principles to code diagnoses, illnesses, injuries, and procedures.
 - d. Identify proper sequencing of principal and secondary diagnoses and procedures.
 - e. Use appropriate coding manual content.
 - f. Use coding principles to accurately code and sequence ICD-10-CM, ICD-10-PCS, CPT, HCPCS codes.
 - g. Prepare a report for a coding accuracy audit.
3. Use encoding software.
- a. Describe how technology can support the coding process.
 - b. Discuss the basic technology and functions of encoder software.
 - c. Use encoder software to assign diagnoses and procedures.
 - d. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of using encoder software.

4. Apply coding concepts related to reimbursement and billing.

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 coders in the maintenance of the billing and reimbursement.
 - d. Discuss the purpose of the chargemaster.
 - e. Use software to support the chargemaster.
5. Apply concepts of clinical classification systems and clinical vocabularies that support the collection and retrieval of health information.

Knowledge and skills leading to the mastery of this competency:

- a. Compare and contrast the common types of numbering systems.
 - b. Identify health record filing systems.
 - c. Discuss how coded information could be used to support the storage and retrieval of health records.
6. Apply knowledge of fraud and abuse of coding practices and compliance program for unethical practices.

Knowledge and skills leading to the mastery of this competency:

- a. Define the impact of fraud and abuse on coding activities.
 - b. Discuss ethical principles related to coding processes.
 - c. Discuss the purpose of a compliance program.
7. Examine the importance of quality clinical data and coded information.

Knowledge and skills leading to the mastery of this competency:

- a. Identify reasons for quality clinical information.
- b. Identify activities that involve coding professionals to assure quality of coded data.
- c. Use an audit tool to assess the quality of coded data.

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 forty (45) 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 participate 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.

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 45 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. The portfolio should be well organized and submitted electronically to the instructor.

Alternative Assignments (Virtual Practicum)

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 medical coders. 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 HCC 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/herself 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.