



This course supports the assessment for Professional Practice: Technical Portfolio I. The course covers 3 competencies and represents 3 competency units.

Introduction

Overview

The Professional Practice Experience (PPE) is your opportunity to put into practice all the health informatics/information management (HIIM) theories you have been studying. Any site where health information is managed in any form is a potential PPE site.

PPE sites can be healthcare facilities, pharmaceutical firms, software vendors, regional health information exchanges, insurance companies, or healthcare research organizations. In addition, larger healthcare organizations may have experiences available to you in their cancer registries, information technology department, finance/business offices, compliance office, quality assurance, utilization review, or risk management departments.

Watch the following video for an introduction to this course:

Competencies

This course provides guidance to help you demonstrate the following 3 competencies:

- **Competency 730.7.1: Adapting to the Healthcare Delivery Environment**
The graduate evaluates how operational components within healthcare organizations demonstrate adherence to government regulatory standards, accreditation guidelines, and quality improvement initiatives.
- **Competency 730.7.2: Application of Basic Health Informatics/ Information Management Skills**
The graduate applies health informatics and information management skills at the managerial level at a healthcare organization.
- **Competency 730.7.3: Professionalism, Confidentiality, and Ethical Behavior**
The graduate displays the qualities and demeanor of professionalism, practices reflection, recognizes the need for and adheres to requirements for confidentiality, and engages in ethical behaviors as an independently functioning health informatics professional.

AHIMA Domains/Subdomains and Knowledge Clusters

The Commission on Accreditation in Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM) is the accrediting agency for Health Information Technology (HIT) programs at the 2-year level and Health Information Management (HIM) programs at the baccalaureate and master's levels. The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) has developed standards for curriculum content that all programs are required to teach. The AHIMA content standards are found in each course of study; you may review the standards to see what content your courses have covered and what areas of content you may be applying during the PPE.



Course Instructor Assistance

As you prepare to successfully demonstrate competency in this subject, remember that course instructors stand ready to help you reach your educational goals. As subject matter experts, mentors enjoy and take pride in helping students become reflective learners, problem solvers, and critical thinkers. Course instructors are excited to hear from you and eager to work with you.

Successful students report that working with a course instructor is the key to their success. Course instructors are able to share tips on approaches, tools, and skills that can help you apply the content you're studying. They also provide guidance in assessment preparation strategies and troubleshoot areas of deficiency. Even if things don't work out on your first try, course instructors act as a support system to guide you through the revision process. You should expect to work with course instructors for the duration of your coursework, so you are welcome to contact them as soon as you begin. Course instructors are fully committed to your success!

Preparing for Success

The information in this section is provided to detail the resources available for you to use as you complete this course.

Learning Resources

The learning resources listed in this section are required to complete the activities in this course. For many resources, WGU has provided automatic access through the course. However, you may need to manually enroll in or independently acquire other resources. Read the full instructions provided to ensure that you have access to all of your resources in a timely manner.

Other Learning Resources

You will use the following learning resources for this course.

Make Study Preparations

Review this course of study **IN ITS ENTIRETY** as it will provide you with a complete look at the expectations of the PPE.

In planning for the PPE, consider the type of healthcare organization for which you would ultimately like to work. In many instances, PPE sites use these experiences as a recruitment opportunity and may even extend a job offer if you are a good fit for their organization. Discuss your future plans with your program mentor or BSHI PPE course instructor to select a site beneficial to your long-term goals. They will help you make a good choice for the PPE.

For you to be successful at the PPE, review course content or return to any course areas you feel unsure about. You will not have quizzes or tests at the PPE site, but you will be expected to know basic HIIM information; asking questions shows your interest in what you are learning at the PPE site, and understanding the HIIM environment will help you ask intelligent questions.

Part 1: Preparing for the Professional Practice Experience

Preparing for the PPE is a collaborative effort among the Field Placement Office, the PPE site,



and the student. All students must attend the mandatory PPE webinar, held on the third Thursday of each month in the evening. Your program mentor will provide the time, date, and log-in information. The webinar will provide information on the PPE requirements, and will give students an opportunity to ask questions and plan appropriately.

In the term before you are ready to actually begin the PPE, your program mentor will refer you to the Field Placement Office to begin the PPE process. They will schedule a call with you at that time, and take you through the process and what is needed.

Preparations for Your PPE

After the Field Placement Office has a verbal commitment from a PPE site, a contract is signed between WGU and the PPE site. The Field Placement Office manages the contract negotiations and will notify you when the contract is signed. When all required immunizations and documents required of students are submitted, you will receive notification as to when you may begin the PPE hours.

Readiness for the Professional Practice Experience

The PPE Preceptor who will oversee your hours will receive the evaluation form from the Field Placement Office. You will receive a PPE time sheet to track your hours. Any information you need before you begin will be provided by the Field Placement Office.

We suggest you call the site and speak to the PPE Preceptor approximately one week before you begin, to introduce yourself and confirm start time and date, location, dress code, parking, and any other information you need.

The first impressions you make will be lasting ones; many PPE sites use these experiences as a recruitment opportunity for new staff members. Remember, the site is committed to students. They want to share their knowledge and teach you. They know their staff grows professionally by teaching others and learning new ideas from students. Enjoy this experience.

Part 2: Beginning the Professional Practice Experience

Your PPE Preceptor will have an evaluation document which contains suggested activities for you to complete while you are at the PPE site. These activities will help you meet the course competencies and complete the required performance tasks found in Taskstream for this course. Sites vary when it comes to the hands-on experiences they will be able to offer, and your Preceptor may include activities not listed on the evaluation form.

The PPE Course Instructor will be in contact with you and your Preceptor during your PPE. If there are any questions or concerns that arise, they will be addressed immediately. Your success in this experience is collaborative, and if there are any concerns, you should make the PPE Course Instructor aware of any issues for quick resolution.

Adapting to the PPE Site

For this first PPE, you will function as a staff member at the organization. Many of the activities related to this first performance assessment will require you to take a comprehensive look at the organization: how it lives out its mission statement, where you see evidence of its vision and values statements, and how it accomplishes its goals. You will have firsthand knowledge of how



staff carries out the organization's goals during daily work. Every workplace has a unique environment.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 730.7.1: Adapting to the Healthcare Delivery Environment**

The graduate evaluates how operational components within healthcare organizations demonstrate adherence to government regulatory standards, accreditation guidelines, and quality improvement initiatives.

Questions About Regulations, Standards, and Improvement

In preparation for the assessments in this course, think about government regulations, accreditation standards, and quality improvement. Make notes for yourself in a notebook, and jot down questions for your PPE Preceptor, for you to discuss.

Review Competency 730.7.1 Assignments

Review the checklist of activities listed under competency 730.7.1 in the PPE evaluation form. Decide with your Preceptor which activities will be appropriate and if there are others available. Review the required assessments in Taskstream for this course of study. Pay special attention to these and gather needed information to fulfill the task requirements.

Part 3: Practicing Health Informatics Skills

Your PPE Preceptor will assist you in spending your time efficiently and effectively; you will work together to establish your goals for the experience. This is your opportunity to "test drive" the workplace processes you have been reading about. Read policies, procedures, and protocol, and analyze different workflow processes. Remember, this is your opportunity to ask questions and see the variety of ways in which health information is used at this organization.

Developing Skills at the PPE Site

Participate in meetings and training sessions; review health information, either in paper, or electronic format; abstract information to help others with reports or for reimbursement. You may be able to work with different information systems and see how well they interface with each other.

Meet staff, speak with them about their work and challenges, and become part of their team. Learn the workflow and the daily operations of the department. Meet staff in other areas if you can, and learn about how staff in your department support the work of other departments.

Take full advantage of the opportunities provided by your PPE. By asking questions and offering to help others in their work, you will learn much more about the organization than you ever could in a textbook or on a website.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 730.7.2: Application of Basic Health Informatics/ Information Management Skills**



The graduate applies appropriate basic health informatics and information management skills based on organizational need within the healthcare organization.

Questions About Your Organization

Think about the various tasks and activities you would like to learn more about and practice. Make notes for yourself and jot down questions for your PPE Preceptor. Review the variety of activities listed on the PPE Evaluation, and select those that you'd like to experience. Discuss those with your Preceptor.

Part 4: Professionalism and the PPE

The final competency of the PPE evaluates your professionalism and requires you to reflect on the PPE—this is YOUR evaluation of the experience and of the clinical site. Every organization has its own culture, and as a visitor within the culture, you leave after the 80-hour experience with an impression of the environment.

You are evaluated for your professionalism, which include qualities such as initiative, willingness to take direction, ability to collaborate, discretion, and your adherence to privacy and security rules and policies. You are also evaluated for your oral and written communication and your ability to finish tasks in a timely manner. Receiving the PPE Evaluation is similar to receiving an annual performance evaluation from a supervisor.

Reflections on Performance

There is usually a sense of relief after completing a PPE. Although you chose the site and you were eager to participate in the PPE, you were also being evaluated and observed. How do you evaluate your own performance at this PPE? It is important to take some time and reflect on your learning, your application of health information management and informatics skills, and your ability to work in your specific PPE setting. Is there a difference today in the way you view this organization than when you began your 80-hour time commitment? Unless you are already a seasoned healthcare veteran, you should be able to identify ways in which you changed or grew in your professional mannerisms or skills.

Ask yourself if this is the type of organization you could see yourself working for, and what it is about the organization that appeals to you. Conversely, if this is the type of organization you could not see yourself working for, identify the reasons why. Everything you learned during your PPE time, positive or negative, will be helpful to you during your next PPE, and more importantly, in your career.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 730.7.3: Professionalism, Confidentiality, and Ethical Behavior**

The graduate displays the qualities and demeanor of professionalism, practices reflection, recognizes the need for and adheres to requirements for confidentiality, and engages in ethical behaviors as an independently functioning health informatics professional.



Questions to Guide Your Experience

Review the PPE checklist and consider the various ways in which you have made a positive, professional impression. Make notes for yourself in your study notebook and jot down questions for your Preceptor. Review the performance tasks for this course before you've completed your hours.

Self Evaluation

Use the PPE checklist to evaluate yourself before you meet with your Preceptor for your evaluation.

Final Steps

Congratulations on completing the activities in this course! This course has prepared you to complete the assessment associated with this course. If you have not already been directed to complete the assessment, schedule and complete your assessment now.