

MIDSTATE COLLEGE
411 W Northmoor Road
Peoria, IL 61614
Fall 2006

COURSE: AH190 MEDICAL CODING PRACTICUM

CREDIT HOURS: 4 quarter credit hours

TEXT: Clinical Coding Workout: Practice Exercises for Skill Development

AUTHOR: AHIMA Coding Products and Services Team

PUBLISHER: American Health Information Management Association

COURSE DESCRIPTION: PREREQUISITES: AH 200 Medical office procedures III & AH 220 Medical office procedures IV -or- HI 215 ICD-9-CM Coding & HI 235 CPT and HCPCS Coding. The extern will perform medical coding as assigned by the on-site supervisor for a minimum of 160 clock hours without payment. Specific arrangements must be made with the department director during the quarter preceding the planned externship experience. The student must meet entry-level requirements to pass this course. At the conclusion of this course, the student will take a comprehensive final assessment exam which will constitute part of the externship grade.

REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLETING THE COURSE: Completion of assessment tools to the satisfaction of the instructor and standard departmental AH190 final exam.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The student will be able to:

1. Participate in daily health care facility function following the same schedule as facility employees.
2. Develop confidence in the application of knowledge, skills, and human relations under the supervision of facility personnel.
3. Complete their education preparation for employment in a health facility.
4. Perform duties in a legal and ethical manner.
5. Assign appropriate ICD-9-CM, CPT, and HCPCS codes.

MIDSTATE GRADING SCALE: 90 - 100 A
80 - 89 B
70 - 79 C*
60 - 69 D
0 - 59 F

*ALL students must have a 70% or better to pass this course.

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INTERIM PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS: The student’s progress is evaluated through assignments. No late assignments will be accepted. The results of the assignments are shared with the student in a timely manner to offer encouragement, information, coaching, retraining and progress reports. Inability to do assignments to a satisfactory level may necessitate repeating the externship. Each week you will be required to communicate with the instructor, either via e-mail, phone, or in person.

*Any student achieving assignments below 70% may not be demonstrating professional behavior and adequate skills and may be required to repeat the externship at the discretion of the Coding and Transcription Advisor.

ATTENDANCE: Students are expected to communicate with the instructor at least once a week and get the assignments turned in on time.

FINAL ASSESSMENT EXAM: Students are required to complete a Final Assessment Exam during finals week. The grade on this exam will comprise a portion of the externship grade and will be used to assess the effectiveness of the Medical Coding Program. A student’s externship grade can be held until this assessment is completed. This may delay a student’s graduation from the program.

External Externship	
Assessment work to be completed	Points
Assessment I	100
Assessment II	100
Assessment III	100
Assessment IV	100
Internet Assignment	50
Externship Assignment	50
Externship Journal	50
Externship Reflection	40
Thank you note(s)	10
Final Exam	100
Total	700

Internal Externship	
Assessment work to be completed	Points
Level I Exercises	100
Level II Exercises	100
Level III Exercises	100
Internet Assignment	50
Externship Assignment	50
Externship Reflection	40
Thank you note(s)	10
Professionalism	100
Final Exam	100
Total	650

EXTERNSHIPS

Midstate College has a responsibility to the profession, patients, students and itself to allow only qualified individuals to participate in externship.

To participate in the 160 hour externship, the student must have a 2.00 grade point average overall, including at least a “C” or better in all core major courses, a typing speed of 35 wpm with five or less errors on 5 minute timing. Student attitude and interpersonal communication skills must be appropriate and professional. Problems noted on externship evaluations must be remedied. Externship sites are not required to keep a student until the externship is completed if the student is not performing in a This is a standardized syllabus for AH190. All modifications will be made by the program director to maintain consistency.

satisfactory manner. If there is any evidence that the student can not perform effectively in the experience, the clinical externship may be terminated and graduation may be adversely affected.

Remember:

*Externships are designed as a learning experience, and we are guests in each medical facility. This is not a job-hunting or recruitment situation, but an opportunity to observe and participate in the regular daily routine of various specialties.

* The extern experience is always supervised.

*A student must participate in a minimum of 160 hours of experience. It is not expected that all competencies will be performed at the extern site. However, there should be a variety of opportunities provided in all areas.

(These hours are scheduled during the final quarter after the completion of all administrative and clinical coursework.)

As in the classroom portion of the curriculum, the experiences begin with the technical aspects and progress to the more skilled management aspects of health information management. Under the supervision of healthcare facility personnel and Medical Coding faculty, students learn and complete actual health information procedures and observe the activities and personnel interactions of their future work environment. Students will be completing these activities in the health information management departments and other related departments of acute care facilities, ambulatory care facilities and long term care facilities.

The importance of the practicum experience to health information management education is immeasurable. Through the application of classroom learning the theories of health information management are reinforced, the dynamics of the workplace are observed and the realistic dimension of the profession is added. No amount of classroom simulation can replace it.

The externship experience should provide for:

- Development of the student as a person responsible for actions and outcomes
- Acquisition of knowledge and skills needed for entry-level competency
- Recognition of the needs of the organization and its patients and clients
- Adherence to the mission policies and procedures of the institution

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO EXTERNSHIP

Confidentiality of clinical information is of primary importance. Through the affiliation, the student will have access to patient health information as well as sensitive information about the site, personnel issues, etc. To retain this privilege, students must adhere to the tenets of the AHIMA Code of Ethics at all times.

Regardless of the student's level of employment experience, the student's role at the clinical site is that of a student. Respect for all employees, appreciation for the facility's mission, interest in learning, initiative and responsibility for one's actions are among the characteristics that the student must embody. The student should be eager to contribute time, talent and energy to the goals of the clinical site. Ask questions so that you thoroughly understand information and/or procedures. Each facility is different and may utilize different systems and practices. Do not compare facilities while attending the externship.

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The employees at the clinical sites will serve as your teachers for many of the activities. They will explain, demonstrate the procedures and assist with questions. They do this in addition to their normal duties without extra compensation. Today's healthcare facilities are under pressure to achieve maximum productivity from their resources of people and equipment. Therefore, it is extremely important that students make the most of their time spent at the site by being prepared, attentive and punctual. Generally, the site supervisor determines if and when to allow students to complete their practicum courses at their organization. There are times when taking a student may result in less than optimal outcome; however, almost every experience is a learning experience.

The Affiliation Agreement between Midstate College and the externship site requires that each student furnish proof of current physical examination status upon request. This may include PPD and drug screens. The student is responsible for furnishing such documentation to the program director, who will make it available to the site upon request. The student must also purchase and wear a Midstate College name badge.

Medical Coding students may be required to undergo a background check before attending externship sites per the request of affiliated hospitals, pursuant to JCAHO requirements. Student will be assessed a one time fee if a background check is required.

STUDENT RIGHTS DURING EXTERNSHIP

All demonstrations and/or practices must be done with respect for the student's personal dignity, modesty, and safety. If a student believes that he/she is placed in a compromising situation, he/she is to voice this concern to the supervisor involved. If this does not resolve the situation, the student is immediately to contact the appropriate Midstate College faculty member. If the situation is not resolved at this level, the student is to report the incident to the Director of the Health Information department.

EXTERNSHIP POLICIES

1.0 General Policies:

- 1.1 Students must report to the clinical sites at the specified time. If a student is unable to report to the assigned site on time, both the site supervisor and the Medical Coding program director must be notified as soon as possible.
- 1.2 Excused absences must be approved by the MCS instructor and the site supervisor and must be made up before the end of the term and at a time convenient to the clinical site.
- 1.3 Students will follow all organizational and departmental policies and procedures for employees.
- 1.4 Students are responsible for transportation to and from each site.
- 1.5 Clinical sites are selected based on availability of facilities to participate, and assignment is at the discretion of the MCS instructor.
- 1.6 In the Health Information department, employees are sometimes addressed by their first names. Informality of this type is discouraged in the presence of patients and in conversation with professional personnel. The best rule is to address people by their titles (Dr., Ms, Mr.) until requested to do otherwise.

2.0 Confidentiality Policies:

- 2.1 Students are provided with supervised "real world" learning experiences to develop insight, understanding and skill in health information practices. Placing students in the clinical setting will allow them access to patient information. The Medical Coding

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faculty members are aware and considerate of the patient's right to privacy. Students are required to review and discuss the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) Code of Ethics that provides definitive and binding standards of conduct.

- 2.2 The student shall not disclose any patient's identifiable medical or demographic information gained from the practice experience assignments in a health information department.
 - 2.3 The student shall not disclose any patient's identifiable medical or demographic information related to patient treatment gained from review of medical records, databases, studies, committee minutes and reports or from any other source.
 - 2.4 The student shall not acknowledge or confirm the fact of an inpatient or outpatient stay or an emergency department visit of a patient if knowledge of the hospital admission was gained from information generated from within the Health Information department or the health facility while on externship assignment.
 - 2.5 The student shall follow the written privacy and confidentiality policies and procedure as determined by the health facility where the student is completing the externship assignment.
 - 2.6 Violation of the privacy practices of the clinical site will be cause for withdrawal from the course with a grade of WF (withdrawal failure).
- 3.0 Professional Image Policy:
- 3.1 Students' appearance reflects not only on themselves but also on the Medical Coding Specialist Program at Midstate College.
 - 3.2 For all activities at the clinical site, students are expected to dress in a professional manner. Women students should wear dresses, suits, skirts of the appropriate length, dress pants, and appropriate shoes. Men students should wear dress pants and appropriate shirts. Ties are not necessary unless a suit is worn. Student must not wear jeans of any color, sweat suits, shorts, or athletic shoes.
 - 3.3 Students will adhere to the dress code of the externship site.
- 4.0 Policy on Experience Equivalency:
- 4.1 If a student feels she/he has equivalent experience in any of the activities to be performed in the externship as described in the course outline, the activity may be waived at the discretion of the Medical ICoding faculty with the following documentation:

The students must provide their job description and a letter from their supervisor that documents the length of time the student has been employed in the position and performing the procedures in question and the quality/quantity of work performed.

Students will prepare a binder that includes:

1. Externship Diary if completed at a healthcare provider office -or- Externship Reflection if completed internally at Midstate College
2. Copies of Thank You Notes to each facility
3. Externship Assignment

This binder is to be turned in to the instructor no later than Friday of the last week of classes, before the final exams week of the quarter in which the externship occurs.

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EXTERNSHIP JOURNAL

Students completing their externship at a healthcare provider's office are required to maintain a journal reflecting their daily experiences. A journal entry should be made for each day, each site visited. The structure of the journal may be in any format that the student chooses to use. List the date, amount of time spent and a description of the activities performed. Each entry should include the following:

- the student's name and name of the site
- the date with starting and ending time spent on each activity
- title of the activity performed and/or observed
- name, credential, and title of the employee the student worked with on the activity
- ability of the employee to explain the procedure and answer questions
- problems encountered by the student, if any.
- for each day, answer the question: "What did I learn today?" If your first answer is nothing, keep asking until you come up with what you learned. Every experience is a learning experience.

EXTERNSHIP RELECTION

All externship students (internal and external) are required to compose a paper reflecting on their experience in the course. The paper should be at least two pages, double-spaced, in length and contain at least the following:

- Self-assessment of strengths in coding
- Self-assessment of weaknesses in coding
- Action plan to improve areas of weakness
- Plans to prepare for certification examination
- Immediate career goals and plan to achieve
- Long-range career goals and plan to achieve

THANK YOU LETTERS

A thank you letter should be written and mailed to each Professional Practice Experience supervisor or interview subject, one per site, within one week of the activity. A copy of the letter should be submitted to the Medical Coding faculty advisor.

EXTERNSHIP ASSIGNMENT

An assignment is required of all students in this course. The following information is to be gathered and written in essay format:

1. What is the background,/training/credentials of the coding specialists?
2. How many coders are there?
3. What are the credentials do the coding staff possess?
4. How many people in the department are credentialed?
5. What hours do the coders work?
6. What is the relationship of the coding department with the billing department?
7. Do the coders use an encoder, coding books, or both?
8. What effect do various insurance companies have on coding practices?

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Students completing their externships at a healthcare facility may obtain the information from their host site. Students completing their externships internally at Midstate College will be required to contact a coder or coding supervisor at any area healthcare facility to obtain the information.

TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING FOR EXTERNSHIP

Each student is responsible for establishing their own method of transportation to and from their clinical site. Each student is responsible for any parking fees which may be incurred.

STUDENT ABSENCE FROM EXTERNSHIPS

You must complete a minimum of 160 hours in the 12 weeks of placement. It is expected that students will be present for all of the scheduled hours for the externship. Under certain extreme circumstances, it may become necessary to miss professional practice experience. **In such cases, the student will be expected to make up the hours missed.** If you are ill, please call the assigned externship site supervisor and notify the program director. You must, also, complete an absence report sheet for your file.

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