

Career Information

Health Informatics

Post-Baccalaureate Certificate

Health Information Administration

Professional Tasks and Working Environment

Informatics encompasses understanding technology's impact on people, developing new uses for technology and applying information technology in the context of another field. The Medical College of Georgia offers an applied informatics bachelor's degree in health information administration (H.I.A.). This degree prepares graduates for informatics-related roles in the health care delivery system. Graduates of the program are eligible to take a national credentialing exam to become a Registered Health Information Administrator (R.H.I.A.). Frequently, health information administrators are referred to as health information managers (H.I.M.).

R.H.I.A.s organize information used in evidence-based medicine. They arm the provider with organized evidence to support patient care, reimbursement, teaching, research, quality improvement and legal inquiries. Accomplished in the art and science of electronic information systems, these professionals serve as advocates of the patient-provider relationship and information suppliers for the business side of evidence-based medicine.

Skills and Interests Most Suited to a Career in H.I.A.

Health information administrators manage people and information. They must be able to supervise others, think logically, understand how systems function and interact, apply business theory for effective work processes, write and speak clearly and discreetly handle confidential work. H.I.A.s with interest in computer science, business administration, health sciences and health care facility administration are well-suited for a health informatics career.

Employment and Career Opportunities

Opportunities for an applied health informatics career are excellent. H.I.A.s are currently in demand and the future outlook is equally strong. Health information administrators are employed by hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, medical research centers, health data

organizations, insurance companies, accounting firms, law firms, managed-care organizations, pharmaceutical companies, physician practices, health agencies, local and state health departments, information systems vendors and private industry.

There is a nationwide shortage of health information administrators. Experienced health information professionals have ample opportunities to advance to higher-level management and consulting positions within the health care industry.

Salary Information

Starting salaries range from \$30,000 to \$50,000 annually, depending on location and levels of responsibility. Salaries of experienced professionals reach \$50,000 to \$75,000 and up. Some H.I.A.s who provide consulting can earn in excess of \$100,000.

Program Offered at MCG

MCG offers a certificate in health information administration. The program is a "4+1," meaning the student who has earned a bachelor's degree in allied health, nursing, business administration or computer science may apply for MCG's post-baccalaureate certificate program in H.I.A. Students begin the MCG program fall semester. Students who complete the certificate program are eligible to take the national registration exam to become a registered health information administrator.

MCG also offers a junior transfer bachelor's degree in health information administration. Students begin at MCG after two years of coursework at another regionally accredited college or university. For more information, contact the Office of Academic Admissions.

General Admissions Criteria

Admission is based on college grade point averages, personal interviews and assessment of motivation and qualities needed to successfully complete the program. Only grades of C or better will be accepted in transfer. A 2.3 overall GPA on a 4.0 scale is required for consideration. References should be from individuals



who can evaluate your academic performance.

Requirements for admission consideration:

- proof of active or current registration or license in an allied health or nursing profession (for applicants with bachelor's degrees in allied health or nursing)
- bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university
- at least two years of clinical experience
- submission of transcripts from all prior colleges/universities attended and completion of application form
- interview by departmental faculty
- completion of prerequisite courses in anatomy and physiology, accounting (three semester hours) and micro-computer applications with lab, including word processing and spreadsheets (three semester hours).

Applicants whose first language is not English must submit official TOEFL scores. A minimum score of 550 is required for admissions consideration.

Technical Standards

In addition to demonstrating personal characteristics appropriate for a health professions career, students must satisfy general and specific technical standards for this program. Please visit www.mcg.edu/sah/him/techstandards.htm to review these requirements.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

Financial aid and other assistance is available. MCG participates in all federal student aid programs as well as state and private programs. MCG helps students fund for their education through grants, scholarships, loans, a service commitment program and/or employment.

Accreditation

Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education
c/o AHIMA
233 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 2150
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 233-1131

Estimated Full-Time Academic Expenses

	<i>Tuition</i>	<i>Fees</i>	<i>Books/Supplies/Other</i>
Per semester	\$1,819*	293	1,000**

* Non-residents of Georgia pay an additional \$5,457 tuition per semester. Residents of Aiken and Edgefield counties in South Carolina receive a waiver of non-resident tuition.

** Costs vary by major. Please check with your department for details.

(Costs are for 2005-2006. All tuition charges, board, room rent or other charges are subject to change at the end of any academic term.)

Estimated Living Expenses

	<i>On- or off-campus apartment</i>	<i>Commuter</i>
9 months	\$13,869	\$9,864
12 months	18,492	13,152

Hardware/Software Requirements

IBM-compatible PC

- Pentium II/233 MHz processor or higher; Pentium III/4 processor recommended
- 64MB of RAM (128MB or higher preferred)
- CD-ROM, CD-RW or DVD-RW recommended
- 20GB hard drive (30GB or higher preferred)
- SVGA (1024 x 768 or higher) display
- Full duplex sound card with speakers/headphones and microphone
- Windows operating system, Windows 2000 or higher recommended
- 56kb modem and/or ethernet card or wireless card
- Internet connection through an ISP account or a network; cable, DSL or satellite high-speed access highly recommended

Macintosh

- PowerPC 120MHz processor or higher; G4 processor recommended
- 64MB of RAM (128MB or higher preferred)
- CD-ROM, CD-RW or DVD-RW recommended
- 20GB hard drive (30GB or higher preferred)
- 1024 x 768 or higher display resolution, thousands of colors
- Full duplex sound with a microphone
- System 8.0 or higher operating system
- 56kb modem and/or ethernet card or wireless card
- Internet connection through an ISP account or a network; cable, DSL or satellite high-speed access highly recommended

Software

- Netscape 6.0 or higher, or Microsoft Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher
- Windows Media Player 9.0 or higher for access to Tegrity presentations
- Most recent version of Microsoft Office Professional (including Access)
- Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.0 (or higher)
- Winzip

Proprietary browser versions (those not downloaded directly from Netscape or Microsoft) may not work reliably with online systems. If you use other "Office" type programs, please note that some professors may require you to convert your files to a MS-Office compatible format for online submission. Your connection to the Internet may initiate behind a firewall; however, the firewall settings may have to be adjusted to allow for proper functioning of our Web-based tools.

When to Apply

Applications for this program should be received by **July 1**, but will be accepted until the class is filled. Earlier application is encouraged.

For best chance of acceptance, application to this program should be made during the fall preceding the fall in which admission is sought to allow adequate time receipt of all required information. All application materials should be RECEIVED in MCG's Office of Academic Admissions by March 1. Applications completed after this date are considered on a remaining space available basis. Complete applications include the application, references, official academic materials, documentation of shadowing hours, and documentation of professional certifications, if applicable. If accepted to the program, documentation of current CPR and First Aid certification is required upon enrollment.

How to Get an Application

To receive an application for this program, visit www.mcg.edu/admissions, or call or write:

Office of Academic Admissions
170 Kelly Building—Administration
Medical College of Georgia
Augusta, Georgia 30912
Telephone: (706) 721-2725
1-800-519-3388

E-mail: underadm@mcg.edu
Web site: www.mcg.edu/admissions

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a health information administrator?

Health information administrators are experts who secure, analyze, integrate and manage information that directs the health care industry. H.I.A.s are an integral part of the health care team. Doctors, nurses and other health care professionals look to the H.I.A. for guidance on health information administrative issues. By providing accurate and reliable information, the H.I.A. directly contributes to quality patient care. An H.I.A. career combines patient care, management and technology.

H.I.A.s are people managers as well as information specialists. H.I.A.s frequently interact with other members of medical, financial and administrative staffs to ensure that information systems are protected and driven by accurate, up-to-date data. In addition, H.I.A.s determine health information policies, budgets and resources.

What do H.I.A.s do?

The H.I.A. may specialize in one of the following roles:

H.I.A. for Integrated Systems. As health-care delivery systems continue to evolve, and as organizations that were once competitors merge into entities such as managed care and integrated networks, the H.I.A. will be responsible for the organizational direction of health information.

Clinical Data Specialist. In this role, the H.I.A. concentrates on data management functions including coding for reimbursement, outcomes management, specialty registries and research databases.

Patient Information Coordinator. As a recently developed service role, the H.I.A. helps health care consumers to manage their personal health information, including personal health histories and release of health care information. The patient information coordinator also educates consumers to understand managed-care services and how to access health information resources.

Data Quality Manager. Strategic planning and decision-making are based on accurate, reliable, and timely health information. The H.I.A. is responsible for data management functions including continu-

ous quality improvement activities for data integrity throughout the organization, data dictionary development and data quality monitoring and audits.

Information Security Manager. In this setting, the H.I.A. is responsible for managing the security of electronically maintained health information, including the requirement for data security, policies and privilege systems and performance auditing.

Data Resource Administrator. The H.I.A.'s role is managing records and data that use cutting-edge technology to store health information, such as the electronic medical record, computer-based patient record and data repositories, as well as ensuring long-term data integrity and access.

Research and Decision Support Specialist. The H.I.A. provides senior managers with reliable and timely information for decision-making and strategy development by using various analytical tools and databases.

Where do H.I.A.s work?

The major places of employment are health care organizations, such as hospitals and large clinics. However, other health-related organizations also need accurate and up-to-date information. Increasing numbers of H.I.A.s are employed by managed care organizations, insurance companies, law firms, accounting firms, physician practices, mental health care facilities, nursing homes, federal and state health care agencies, consulting firms, health data organizations and information systems vendors. Colleges and universities that offer health information administration or health information technology programs employ H.I.A.s as faculty.

How much do H.I.A.s earn?

Salaries depend on position, experience, location, education and employer. According to 1998 information provided by the American Health Information Management Association, more than half of new H.I.A. graduates with a bachelor's degree start with salaries in the \$30,000 to \$50,000 range. After five years, many are earning \$50,000 to \$70,000. H.I.A.s in top management positions can exceed \$100,000 per year.

What is the outlook for career opportunities in H.I.A.?

H.I.A. career opportunities continue to grow. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that more than 47,000 additional H.I.A. professionals will be needed by the year 2005. The October 1996 edition of *U.S. News and World Report* featured health information administration in its 1997 Career Guide, reporting that H.I.A. is one of the 20 "hottest jobs for the future," and that the demand for H.I.A.s is expected to exceed supply.

How do I obtain more information about a career in H.I.A.?

We recommend taking a Closer Look tour. Closer Look Visitations are designed for people still exploring career choices who want to take a first-hand look at health science fields, including H.I.A. The tours are guided by admissions counselors and H.I.A. professionals. The tour includes a look at the Medical College of Georgia campus, the opportunity to speak with former MCG H.I.A. students, a tour through the classroom facilities and a visit to a real-world setting where H.I.A.s work. Admission counselors will review admission requirements and academic programs.

To make a reservation for a Closer Look Visitation, visit www.mcg.edu/students/tour.html, or e-mail, call or write the Office of Academic Admissions.

Visit our departmental web site at <http://www.mcg.edu/sah/him/>.

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of Georgia is an Equal
Opportunity Educational
Institution.**