

Career Information

Health Informatics

Bachelor of Science

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 organiza-

tions, 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 grants a bachelor of science degree in health information administration. The program is a "2+2," meaning the student completes the first two years at any accredited college of choice, and the last two years on the MCG campus. Students begin the MCG program fall semester of their junior year. Students who complete the program are eligible to take the national registration exam to become a registered health information administrator.

MCG also offers a post-baccalaureate certificate program in health information administration to students who are licensed or registered in nursing or an allied health profession or who have earned a bachelor's degree in either business administration or computer science. For more information, contact the Office of Academic Admissions.

Both programs are offered online. For more information go to <http://www.mcg.edu/sah/DHI/OnlinePrograms.htm>

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.

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 their education through grants, scholarships, loans, a service commitment program and/or employment.

Academic Common Market

The MCG Department of Health Informatics participates in the Academic Common Market. Students from South Carolina may petition their home state to learn whether they qualify for in-state tuition at MCG.

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

Courses to Take the First Two Years

The courses required to graduate from MCG comprise a core curriculum divided into six categories (Areas A-F). The options for completing these prerequisites for transfer to MCG are listed below.

A. Essential Skills 9 semester hours
English Composition I 3 hours
English Composition II 3 hours
(Literature based)

College Algebra, Mathematical Modeling, Trigonometry,
Pre-calculus or Calculus 3 hours

B. Institutional Options** 4-5 semester hours
Introduction to Computers

Critical Thinking
Creative Writing
Ethics
Health and Wellness

Statistics
Economics
Speech
Medical Terminology
Any approved guided elective from Area F

C. Humanities and Fine Arts** 6 semester hours

Ethics
Foreign Language
Speech, Oral Communications
Literature
Philosophy
Drama, Art or Music Appreciation
Logic
Electives in Humanities and Fine Arts
Religion

D. Science, Mathematics and Technology 10-11 semester hours

One four-hour laboratory science course, one three-hour non-laboratory science course and an additional three-hour course in science, mathematics or technology, or two four-hour laboratory science courses and an additional three-hour course in mathematics, science or technology.

E. Social Science** 12 semester hours

United States History
United States Government
Other History
Economics
Psychology
Sociology
Anthropology
Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups
Lower division electives in Psychology and Sociology

F. Courses Appropriate to the Major 18 semester hours

Anatomy and Physiology I and II w/labs. 8 hours
Accounting. 3 hours
Management Information Systems/
Computer Applications (w/lab,
including word processing and
spreadsheets) 3-4 hours
Guided approved electives 3-4 hours
Basic Computer Science, Accounting,
Management, Biological or Social Science

* If this is taken in another area of the core, the hours would be taken in additional guided electives.

** If a student planning to transfer to MCG from another school in the University System of Georgia has completed this area with courses taken there or at another institution from which MCG accepts transfer credit, MCG will accept the area as satisfied. A student planning to transfer from a school not in the University System of Georgia should choose from the list of courses.

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 and Russell and Lee counties in Alabama 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 and How to Apply

This is a transfer program that requires applicants to attend another accredited college or university of their choice to complete the required core curriculum courses (see the *Courses to Take the First Two Years* section). During their sophomore year, students can apply for transfer admission to MCG. Accepted applicants transfer fall semester to begin their junior year.

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

How to Get an Application

To receive an application for this degree 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 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

continuous 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 the managing of 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. All admission counselors will review admission requirements and academic programs. To make a reservation for a Closer Look Visitation, write the Office of Academic Admissions, Medical College of Georgia, 170 Kelly Building, Augusta, Georgia 30912, call (706) 721-2725, or e-mail underadm@mail.mcg.edu. Visit our web site at <http://www.mcg.edu/sah/him/>.

How do I get started?

1. Attend the regionally accredited college or university of your choice and complete the core curriculum. (See the section on *Courses to Take the First Two Years.*) Apply to the Medical College of Georgia early during your second year of college. If you are accepted, you will begin the H.I.A. program the fall of your junior year.
2. MCG offers a two-year, full-time professional curriculum in health information administration. This four-year (2+2) program results in a bachelor of science degree in health information administration. Graduates are prepared to take the national registration examination to become certified as a Registered Health Information Administrator. H.I.A.s are also known as R.H.I.A.s for this reason.

**The Medical College
of Georgia is an Equal
Opportunity Educational
Institution.**