

Northern Essex Community College

Medical Coding Certificate Program Handbook



2018-2019

Updated: February 7, 2017

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Welcome

Welcome to Northern Essex Community College, Division of Health Professions, Medical Coding Certificate Program. This *Program Handbook* has been prepared to acquaint you with the Medical Coding program practicum requirements. This *Program Handbook* and the NECC *Academic Catalog* contain policies and procedures pertinent to the Medical Coding Program and the College. This *Program Handbook* is meant to supplement the policies of NECC. Updates will be made as needed. Students are responsible for adhering to these policies and any updates. Keep this handbook readily available for your reference and be sure to ask questions about any information that is unclear.

All of the learning activities in the Medical Coding program have been carefully designed to ensure that students will develop the needed knowledge, skills, abilities, and professionalism to successfully transition to entry-level practice as a Medical Coding specialist. Our programs are also designed to help prepare you to pass certification exams in Medical Coding.

It is our goal for each student's didactic course work and professional practice experiences to enable development of the needed skills to begin a post-graduation career as a Medical Coding Specialist. The Medical Coding Program will build entry-level skills within and across nationally-identified practice competencies to ensure that each student becomes cross-trained and multi-skilled. We also aspire to train students to become life-long learners who will contribute to the Medical Coding profession at local, state and national levels throughout their careers.

The Medical Coding Program supports the mission of Northern Essex Community College to provide occupational programs and community services which will enhance the social, cultural and economic life in the region. We are committed to providing well-trained medical coders, medical billers, and electronic health record specialists with relevant skills and knowledge that meet the needs of the community and the wider profession.

The faculty look forward to working with you! Best wishes as a Medical Coding student at Northern Essex Community College.

Description of the Medical Coding Certificate Program

Medical Coders play an important role in reimbursement and compliance in the health care system. They rely on their knowledge of disease processes and consult classification manuals to accurately assign codes to medical diagnoses, procedures and services for which the health care providers will be reimbursed. If you are detail oriented, have strong computer skills, and are seeking a career in health care that does not involve working directly with the patients, the Certificate in Medical Coding may be for you.

The Certificate in Medical Coding has been designed for entry-level positions. Courses include medical terminology and human biology in addition to coding-specific courses.

Career Opportunities

Graduates will be able to pursue many career paths that provide flexible hours and a challenging workload. Medical coders work in a variety of health care settings including hospitals, clinics, physicians' offices, medical insurance companies, government agencies, and coding service offices. Job opportunities are very good and are expected to grow.

Program Requirements

Students who attend the Medical Coding program through iHealth@NECC will complete most of their course work online and come to our Lawrence Campus one day each week for in-class meetings. Students should be aware that the Medical Coding Practicum will require an additional time commitment in a health care facility. Practicum experiences are scheduled Monday – Friday during the day.

Students must earn a grade of “C” or better in all required courses in order to graduate. A minimum of 28 credit hours are required for graduation.

Northern Essex Community College Mission Statement

At NECC, our mission is to educate and inspire our students to succeed. We provide a welcoming environment focused on teaching and learning – strongly committed to unlocking the potential within each student and empowering our diverse community of learners to meet their individual goals. We are a community college dedicated to creating vibrant and innovative opportunities that encourage excellence and enhance the cultural and economic life of our region.

Medical Coding Program Mission Statement

The mission of the Medical Coding Program is to graduate competent entry-level Medical Coding Specialists who meet the employment needs of area healthcare providers.

MRT 293 Medical Coding Practicum Course Description

The student will apply the principles of coding learned in the classroom under direct supervision of a coder/analyst at the affiliating health care facility as well as no less than 30-hours (or 50%) in an online coding module under the direct supervision of the practicum coordinator. The coding systems applied will be the current ICD-CM and CPT. PLEASE NOTE: CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information), CHRI (Criminal Records Central Repository), and/or SORI (Sex Offender Record Information) checks are required prior to participation in this course. Students must provide their own transportation to and from their practicum site. Malpractice insurance is required and provided through the college. Students must attend a mandatory orientation meeting the semester prior to beginning their practicum.

Program-Specific Courses

Course #	Course Name	Credits	Comments
BIO101	Human Biology Or BIO 122	3	Prerequisite BIO121 with a C or Better
ENG101	English Composition I	3	
HES115	Medical Terminology	3	
HES207	Clinical Pathophysiology	3	Prerequisite BIO101 or BIO 122
MRT117*	Basic Diagnostic Coding Systems	3	Prerequisite
MRT118	Procedure Coding Systems (CPT)	3	Prerequisite
MRT217	Intermediate Diagnostic Coding	3	Prerequisite
MRT218	Intermediate Procedural Coding	3	Prerequisite
MRT204	Reimbursement, Compliance & Coding Issues	3	Prerequisite, Spring Semester Only
MRT293	Coding & Classification Practicum	1	Prerequisite Comments: 60 Practicum hours required

***Note: CIS110 Computer Applications must be taken before MRT117**

Medical Coding Student Learning Outcomes

1: Students/Graduates will demonstrate professional integrity, reliability, trust, and ethical practice competence.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate both theoretical and practical knowledge of current ICD-CM and CPT coding principles to perform entry level coding of a variety of health records.
- Code a variety of health records for prospective payment purposes.
- Demonstrate knowledge of ethical behavior.
- Document time frames required for key events (i.e. amount of time allotted to process a fee ticket/superbill, time allotted to working denials, etc.)
- Describe or correct coding errors to effect proper reporting to third party payers for healthcare services.
- Demonstrate good work habits (punctuality, dependability, initiative)
- Show overall work performance in the following: accuracy, organization, and interest.

SECTION II: STUDENT HANDBOOK, POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Professional Behavior

Student externs must remain professional at all times during your practicum experience. This could be a potential employment opportunity and your attitude can help or hinder your chances of being hired.

Supervisors frequently take notice of such positive behaviors as arriving early, being organized and ready to work, taking initiative, displaying a helpful attitude, feeling empathy with others, demonstrating an eagerness to learn, using idle time wisely, asking questing, assuming responsibility, showing gratitude, and meeting or exceeding expectations.

Supervisors are also attentive to employees who arrive late and/or leave early, are unprepared to work, waste time, overstep boundaries, engage in inappropriate behaviors, are aggressive and demanding, and who make excuses for such behaviors.

The Medical Coding extern acts as a representative of Northern Essex Community College and the Medical Coding Program, the NECC Practicum Coordinator and faculty, and himself/herself. As a result, care must be taken to project a professional image in terms of dress, hygiene, speech, demeanor and attitude. Agency dress codes must be observed.

Cleanliness is a major value in the medical profession. Students must demonstrate this value to others by having clean hair, nails, breath, clothing and accessories. In addition, it is customary in a health care setting to avoid using products which have scents, such as perfume, hairspray, tobacco, garlic and others because these can exacerbate symptoms in patients who are not feeling well and colleagues with allergies. Displaying flamboyant hairstyles, make-up, tattoos, and piercing will not be tolerated.

Two of the characteristics most valued by employers are dependable employee attendance and punctuality. Once your practicum schedule is formulated it is mandatory for you to adhere to it. Absenteeism and lateness create confusion and frustration in the workplace and will not be tolerated. The supervisor, in the event of an unavoidable absence, must be notified immediately, along with the NECC Practicum Coordinator.

Random Drug Screening

Students are expected to perform at their highest functional level during all educational and clinical experiences. Thus student's performance must be free of impairment caused by non-prescribed drug/s or alcohol use. Students enrolling in Health Professions programs are required to undergo and pass a drug and/or alcohol screening analysis in order to be eligible for placement in a clinical facility. Students assigned to clinical education experiences at our contracted facilities may also be required to undergo and pass random drug screening analysis in order to remain at that clinical facility **and in the program**. Students who either fail to pass, or refuse to submit to, or fail to comply with a random drug screening analysis within the designated time frame will be ineligible for clinical placement which will affect their status in the program.

Students enrolling in an academic program that involves working with children, the disabled, the elderly, a cooperative education experience or a program that includes a clinical affiliation with a private or public health care provider, are required to undergo a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check, a Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) check and/or a Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) check.

Prior to beginning an internship/externship/practicum experience students will need to provide a government issued photo identification and sign a release form allowing the college to view the student's CORI, CHRI or SORI reports. Depending on the contents of a student's CORI, CHRI or SORI reports, participation in an academic program or a cooperative education experience or a clinical or practicum affiliation related thereto, may be denied. For more information, visit www.necc.mass.edu/cori-sori

Immunization Release

Students are required to comply with immunization requirements for their safety and the safety of the patients and employees at the clinical facility. Therefore, students acquire all immunizations and sign a release form for the college to advise the clinical sites of their immunization records. Further, this release is used to facilitate the student's care following an exposure to an infectious disease or an injury during his/her clinical practicum/externship/internship education experience.

Malpractice Insurance & Health Insurance and Proof of Coverage

All students are required to have malpractice insurance while participating in the practicum experience. This insurance is obtained through the College. Students must also have health insurance and be able to provide proof of coverage.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is expected of all students. Academic integrity means representing oneself and one's work honestly. Consequences of plagiarizing or cheating will be up to the instructor and can include a written warning, assignment failure, course failure, or program dismissal. The following are examples of academic dishonesty.

1. Plagiarizing from work of others. When taking information from a resource clear distinction should be made between quotation and paraphrases. Plagiarism is using another "persons ideas or writing without giving proper credit to the original source."
2. Cheating on lab reports, practice sets, class assignments, and examinations by:
 - a. Falsifying data.
 - b. Submitting homework that was copied from another or previous student.
 - c. Using unauthorized notes during tests.
 - d. Letting others copy from their papers.
3. Misrepresenting the work that you've actually done in your practicum experience.

Application to Graduate

Graduation Process

1. Conduct a graduation audit in Self Service and meet with your Academic Advisor to ensure that you meet the Graduation Requirements for your Program of Study.
2. Students must complete a Graduation Application to be eligible to graduate.
3. Students must submit the completed graduation application by:
 - o March 31st if they are petitioning to graduate for May, 31st
 - o December 1st, for those petitioning to graduate for December 31st
 - o August 15 if petitioning to graduate for August 31st
4. Students should submit the completed Graduation Application to Enrollment Services, Welcome/Express Desk in Haverhill or Lawrence.

Policies and Procedures: Medical Coding Certificate Program

Policy Number 1: Required Practicum Experience Hours

Adopted: April 10, 2015

Revised: February 7, 2017

Policy: Before the student enters their Practicum Experience they will have already passed the didactic portion of educational preparation and will have practiced common Medical Coding procedures during their didactic courses and through use of virtual lab learning experiences.

All students will follow the published NECC break and holiday schedule. Students are not permitted to schedule vacation time that conflicts with the NECC Medical Coding Program schedule.

Procedure:

1. Each semester or summer term students are assigned to a practicum site by the NECC Practicum Coordinator in accordance with the NECC clinical affiliation agreements. Students may be assigned more than one practicum sites while enrolled in the program.
2. The following number of clock hours of practicum are required for successful course completion:
MRT293: Medical Coding Practicum, 1 semester credits: 60 clock hours
3. In order to meet the educational needs of all students' practicum assignments may be changed at any time as determined by the NECC Practicum Coordinator or On-Site Practicum Coordinator or other practicum site supervisors/managers.
4. Students are expected to arrive at the practicum facility on time and sign-in with the On-Site Practicum Coordinator or designee on or before their scheduled start time.
5. Students must sign-out before leaving the Practicum site at their scheduled dismissal time.
6. The Medical Coding program schedule is based upon the NECC academic calendar.
7. The practicum schedule for completion of required clock hours is mutually negotiated and agreed upon by the On-Site Practicum Coordinator, the NECC Practicum Coordinator, and the student.
8. Each Medical Coding student is required to successfully complete MRT 293 – Medical Coding Practicum by earning a grade of “C” (73%) or better.

Policy Number 2: Practicum Placement

Adopted: April 10, 2015

Revised February 7, 2017

Policy: Every effort is made, when possible, to place students within a fifty (50) mile radius of the Northern Essex Community College Lawrence Campus for their practicum experience.

Procedure:

1. Students will register for MRT 293 – Medical Coding Practicum for their practicum experience.

2. All required paperwork (immunizations, CORI/SORI, Technical Standards) must be completed BEFORE the student attends a practicum experience.
3. If there are not enough practicum sites available, students will be placed as soon as one becomes available.
4. If the student is not placed in the current semester, they will receive an incomplete for their grade and complete the required clinical practicum during the following semester.
5. Students may NOT refuse a practicum placement. Any extenuating circumstances should be addressed with the NECC Practicum Coordinator. Refusal of practicum placement will constitute a failing grade for that practicum experience.
6. Exact days and times in which students are expected to attend a practicum is determined solely by the practicum sites.
7. Due to the practicum site's staffing, days to perform practicum clock hours may not be consistent. The NECC Practicum Coordinator will try to provide a schedule as soon as possible to the student before they attend their practicum. The practicum site determines the student practicum placement schedule including the daily hours and start date.
8. Students need to be aware that some practicum sites may have two or more different campus locations in which students may complete their practicum clock hours. Students will be notified of this option before being placed.
9. Students who are working need to adjust their work schedule around their practicum placement. Once placed with a practicum site, students may not change or modify their schedule with the practicum site to accommodate a work schedule unless discussed with and approved by both the NECC Practicum Coordinator and the On-Site Practicum Coordinator.
10. Students must adhere to the schedule set forth in full in order to successfully obtain entry-level knowledge, skills and abilities.

Policy Number 3: Transportation

Adopted: April 10, 2015

Policy: Students in the NECC Medical Coding Program must provide their own transportation to their assigned practicum sites. Students must follow the parking regulations of their assigned practicum site.

Procedure:

1. Students are responsible for arranging and paying for their transportation to their practicum sites.
2. Students in need of a parking space at their practicum site will receive information on parking during their orientation to their practicum site and only if the practicum site has parking spaces available for students.
3. Some practicum sites may require students to park at an off-site location and/or may require students to pay parking fees.

Policy Number 4: Inclement Weather/College Closure

Adopted: April 10, 2015

Revised: February 7, 2017

Policy: The Medical Coding Practicum is an NECC course and, as such, will generally follow the College's decision for school closing or delayed openings in the event of severe or inclement weather.

Procedure:

1. Students' practicum sites are located in various areas so consequently it is impossible to have a centralized person making decisions regarding weather that may pose undue safety hazards to the student. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the student to objectively evaluate the weather conditions and notify the practicum site as early as possible if the student cannot safely arrive to his/her practicum site.
2. In the event of severe weather, the practicum course is an NECC course and thus will follow the College's decision for school closing or delayed openings.
3. It is the student's responsibility to monitor NECC closings or delays and notify their practicum site of any delayed openings or school closings due to severe weather conditions.
4. A delayed opening of two (2) hours is based on college classes routinely starting at 8:00 a.m.; thus a two hour delay means that students should report to their practicum site at 10:00 a.m., regardless of their normal practicum starting time.
5. Hours missed due to college closing must be made up at a time that is mutually agreeable to the student and the affiliate.
6. In the event a student arrives at their practicum site at their normally scheduled time when NECC has declared a two (2) hour delayed opening, the student may be allowed to start practicum early performing work tasks with direct or indirect supervision. The student may use these two (2) hours towards any previously missed practicum time or the student may be allowed an early release time on that day or a future scheduled practicum day at the discretion of the On-Site Practicum Coordinator.
7. When NECC classes are already in session the NECC Practicum Coordinator will notify the practicum sites when NECC classes are cancelled early due to snow or other emergencies in order to establish student early release time from the practicum site(s). Students may not continue to remain at their practicum site once the College has announced that classes are cancelled.
8. In the absence of the NECC Practicum Coordinator, the On-Site Practicum Coordinator or other site supervisors should use their own best judgment in releasing students from their practicum sites during severe weather conditions or during other emergency situations such as flooding, fire, or power loss.

Policy Number 5: Dress Code & Grooming

Adopted: April 10, 2015

Revised: February 7, 2017

Policy: NECC Medical Coding students are required to dress in a professional manner at all times while at their practicum site. Good personal hygiene must be maintained at all times.

The student's appearance must not be distracting to others, including co-workers, patients, or visitors. A distracting appearance is defined as those styles or fashions that are not of a conservative nature appropriate to a healthcare environment such as facial piercing including, but not limited to, piercing of the tongue, nose, cheek, eyebrow, lip, chin or multiple ear piercings and/or visible tattoos.

Massachusetts Commonwealth law requires individuals working in healthcare to wear identification badges that indicate their name and their credentials. In addition, Commonwealth law protects the rights of patients by stating that patients may refuse to be treated by individuals in training without hindering their access to healthcare. Therefore, NECC Medical Coding students must wear a NECC name badge at all times while at their practicum site. This name badge must include, at a minimum, the student's first name and identifies them as a Northern Essex Community College (NECC) student.

The professional dress code, as outlined below, must be followed by all NECC Medical Coding students while at practicum sites.

Please note: Each practicum experience site may have additional dress code requirements.

Procedure:

1. Hair must be of a natural color that a person would be born with. No extreme colors such as blue, green, purple, pink, or orange will be allowed. Hair must be clean and non-distracting – for example: no mohawks.
2. Beards and mustaches must be neatly trimmed and facial hair must not be longer than ½ inch in length.
3. Make-up should be conservatively applied and appropriate to the healthcare setting.
4. Jewelry is to be kept to a minimum. Wearing of jewelry on the face is restricted to the ears. Ear gages must be flesh toned.
5. Shoes are to be business appropriate, no flip-flops or tennis shoes. Open toe shoes are not acceptable.
6. Uniforms are not usually required for Medical Coding students. Regular professional business attire is acceptable. Individual practicum sites may require uniforms for Medical Coding practicum students. If a uniform is required students will be notified prior to placement.
7. Facial piercing must be removed and all visible tattoos must be covered while the student is at the practicum site.
8. Cologne or scented body lotion must not be used. Body and clothing must be free of tobacco odor.
9. Practicum sites may require students to wear their NECC student college identification badge during their practicum rotation. Students are responsible for obtaining an NECC student ID badge and wearing it at all times during their practicum when required.
10. There may be times where the practicum site requires the hospital identification badge to be worn in addition to a NECC identification badge.

Policy Number 6: Attendance and Punctuality

Adopted: April 10, 2015

Policy: NECC Medical Coding students are required to attend practicum during the scheduled time. Absence from the practicum is strongly discouraged due to the time required to master the performance of a variety of health information procedures and the ability of the practicum site to allow make up for missed time.

It has been determined that the established practicum time for each semester is the time required for each student to meet the practicum course learning objectives. Therefore, students are required to make up any missed practicum days. All make-up days must be completed at the end of the semester and prior to the start of the next semester at a time that is agreed upon by the student, the NECC Practicum Coordinator, and the On-Site Practicum Coordinator.

Students who are unable to complete the practicum objectives and make-up days in the available time period between semesters will receive a grade of Incomplete (I) for the practicum course (MRT293) until these hours are completed and a final grade can be calculated. Students may be permitted to complete requirements by Directed Study at the discretion of the NECC Practicum Coordinator and an On-Site Practicum Coordinator.

Students are not allowed to schedule vacation time that conflicts with the Medical Coding Program schedule.

Students are expected to develop a professional work ethic during their practicum. Practicum attendance is one component of a professional work ethic. Students should keep in mind that their practicum attendance will reflect on future recommendations for employment after graduation.

Recognizing that all individuals may become unexpectedly ill or may encounter an unforeseen emergency situation, the procedures listed below outline the steps to be followed in the event of the student's absence from the practicum site.

The student may be required to attend an NECC practicum orientation before being permitted to begin their practicum experience.

Procedure:

1. Student must attend all practicum hours to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to meet course learning objectives.
2. Students must arrive at their designated practicum site on time, in proper attire and prepared to participate in all aspects of the practicum learning experience.
3. Students will not be excused for appointments during practicum hours.
4. In the case of illness/emergency the student must call his/her practicum site at least fifteen (15) minutes before the start of the regularly scheduled practicum clock hours and speak with the On-Site Practicum Coordinator or designee regarding his/her absence. The student must also notify the NECC Practicum Coordinator.
5. Failure to notify the On-Site Practicum Coordinator or designee and NECC Practicum Coordinator of an absence, or to notify the On-Site Practicum Coordinator or designee of the absence in the appropriate time frame may result in an unexcused absence (See Policy 8, Unexcused Absence).

6. At the discretion of the NECC Practicum Coordinator an unexcused absence will result in the student receiving a 'Zero' for that day. Once the day(s) is/are made up, the 'Zero' will be replaced.
7. In the event of a severe illness/accident in which the student is physically unable to notify the On-Site Practicum Coordinator or designee of his/her absence, the absence will not be considered an unexcused absence. Upon returning to the practicum site, the student must provide a physician/health care provider note indicating the date of the absence and the reason for the absence. This note should be given to the NECC Practicum Coordinator after being reviewed by the On-Site Practicum Coordinator.
8. It is not in the best interest of the student, health facility patients, or other healthcare professionals for a student to report to their practicum site when they are ill.
 - a. In the event a student reports to the practicum site with an illness that can easily be spread to other students, patients, or staff, or when the student is unable to function at a level appropriate to a healthcare setting and appears to be a hazard to themselves or others, the On-Site Practicum Coordinator or designee has the authority to release the student from the practicum site for that day. The On-Site Practicum Coordinator will notify the NECC Practicum Coordinator of this decision to release the student due to illness.
 - b. When a student is released from the practicum site due to an illness this will count as an absence day.
9. Each On-Site Practicum Coordinator or designee will record a student attendance/absence through the time tracking method of their convenience.
10. The make-up time for absences will be performed at a time agreed upon by the student and the On-Site Practicum Coordinator. Make-up time must be completed at the end of the semester and before the start of the next semester. The NECC Practicum Coordinator must be notified in writing of the arrangements for make-up time before the end of the semester.
 - a. Students will receive a grade of incomplete for their clinical practicum until scheduled make-up days and course objectives are completed.
 - b. Students must keep in mind that there is limited time between semesters in which to make up missed practicum time. Excessive absences during one practicum course may prevent a student from continuing in the course if the missed time cannot be made-up.
 - c. If the student fails to make up the scheduled missing practicum time as arranged, prior to the start of the next semester, a grade of I (Incomplete) may prevent the student from completing their program on time and graduating at the scheduled date.
 - d. Incomplete grades will revert to a grade of "F" after one semester.
11. Once a student misses three (3) days during a semester the student will meet with the NECC Practicum Coordinator to discuss his/her situation.
12. A students with extended absences (three (3) or more sequential days per semester) related to an extended illness or injury will be required to provide proof of medical clearance by a healthcare provider to be able to return to his/her practicum site.
13. When a student must leave their practicum site prior to their scheduled release time due to illness or emergency, the student's missed practicum hours will be documented and cumulative missed hours will be totaled and must be made up prior to the start of the next semester.

14. Extended time missed from a practicum due to a death in the family, jury duty, military duty, or extended illness may impact on the student's ability to meet practicum course learning objectives. Extended time is defined as three (3) or more missed days.

15. A student who requires extended time (more than three (3) days) off from their practicum for any reason must meet with the NECC Practicum Coordinator to discuss his/her situation and to develop a reasonable and feasible plan for meeting the learning objectives of the practicum course. If a feasible plan to meet the practicum course learning objectives cannot be developed, a student will be counseled by the NECC Practicum Coordinator to withdraw from the practicum course if it is still within the College's acceptable withdrawal time frame.

Policy Number 7: Injuries and Accidents

Adopted: April 10, 2015

Policy: Every effort should be made by students completing practicum experience activities to prevent both injuries and exposure to communicable disease or blood borne pathogens. If an accident or an exposure incident affecting the student should occur, it is the responsibility of the student to initiate the actions outlined below.

Procedure:

1. Immediately report the incident to the On-Site Practicum Coordinator.
2. Go to the nearest hospital emergency room located on the premises or in the immediate geographic area. Most affiliating agencies agree to provide emergency medical care for students and faculty who become ill or injured while engaged in a program at their facility. **The cost of emergency treatment is the responsibility of the student and his/her insurer.**
3. Seek evaluation by a primary care provider, such as a physician or nurse practitioner, and complete other required procedures.
4. Complete and sign the NECC Incident Report (Available from the Medical Coding NECC Practicum Coordinator or is available at the Office of the Dean of Health Professions). The On-Site Practicum Coordinator should make a written notation on the Incident Report if a student refuses medical care. Copies of the report will be retained by the student, the On-Site Practicum Coordinator, and the NECC Practicum Coordinator. The NECC Practicum Coordinator will forward the original copy of the completed report of the incident to the Office of the Dean of Health Professions, 414 Common Street, Room 309, Lawrence, MA 01840.
5. In the instance of exposure to bloodborne pathogens, follow-up care should be made by the student with the student's personal physician consistent with the requirements of the latest OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standards.

Policy Number 8: Unexcused Absence

Adopted: April 10, 2015

Revised: February 7, 2017

Policy: The NECC Medical Coding student is required to notify his/her On-Site Practicum Coordinator when unable to attend practicum due to an illness or unforeseen emergency situation.

If a student fails to appropriately notify their On-Site Practicum Coordinator or designee of his/her absence as outlined in Policy and Procedure 6, Attendance and Punctuality, and as outlined in the student's orientation to the practicum site, this will result in the documentation of an unexcused absence.

The steps to follow for an unexcused absence are outlined in the following procedure

Procedure:

1. In the event of an absence due to illness or unforeseen emergency, a student is expected to **personally** notify the On-Site Practicum Coordinator or designee of his/her absence as outlined in Policy and Procedure 6, Attendance and Punctuality, and as outlined in the student's orientation to the practicum site.
2. If a student fails to notify the On-Site Practicum Coordinator or designee of his/her absence as outlined in Policy and Procedure 6, Attendance and Punctuality, and as outlined in the orientation to the practicum site, the absence will be considered an unexcused absence and the student will receive a 'Zero' for that clinical day.
3. Unexcused absences must be made up prior to the start of the next semester, at a time agreed upon by the student, the On-Site Practicum Coordinator and the NECC Practicum Coordinator.
4. A student who fails to make up an unexcused absence before the start of the next semester will receive a grade of incomplete for that practicum and will not be allowed to progress to program completion and graduation.
5. In the event of a severe illness or accident in which the student is physically unable to notify the On-Site Practicum Coordinator or designee of his or her absence, the absence will not be considered an unexcused absence.
6. In the event of severe illness/accident a student must bring a healthcare provider's note indicating the date(s) of and reason for the student's absence upon returning to the practicum site.

Policy Number 9: Death in Family/Bereavement

Adopted: April 10, 2015

Revised: February 7, 2017

Policy: In the event of a death in the immediate family of an enrolled NECC Medical Coding student, the student is granted an excused absence of three (3) consecutive days for bereavement in a semester. These three (3) bereavement days will not be considered as absence days.

The student may be required to make up practicum time for these three bereavement days only when a student fails to meet the practicum course learning objectives because of this missed time for bereavement.

A student may request additional time off for bereavement with the approval from the NECC Practicum Coordinator, but loss of additional practicum time could potentially affect the student's ability to complete the required practicum course learning objectives.

Immediate family is defined as the student's spouse/partner, parent/guardian, grandparent, child, grandchild, sibling, or another member of the student's extended family. The bereavement policy does not extend to non-family members.

Procedure:

1. The student must notify the On-Site Practicum Coordinator and the NECC Practicum Coordinator in the event of a death in their immediate family.
2. Once the Medical Coding student has notified both the On-Site Practicum Coordinator and the NECC Practicum Coordinator of the death of a student's immediate family member, the NECC Practicum Coordinator will notify the other Medical Coding faculty of the student's absence from class.
 - a. Students are responsible for any missed class notes, assignments, or examinations.
 - b. Students will need to meet with their Medical Coding course instructor(s) to schedule any make-up time for missed work.
3. Students are responsible for notifying other NECC Non-Health Medical Coding (non-MRT-prefix courses) faculty members of their absence from class due to the death of a family member.
 - a. Students are responsible for any missed class notes, assignments, or examinations.
 - b. Students will need to meet with their course instructor(s) to schedule any make-up time for missed work.
4. The days off for bereavement during the practicum will be documented in the student's practicum attendance record as a clinical absence due to death in the family.
5. In accordance with Policy 6: Attendance and Punctuality, students must make up any absences that exceed the three (3) bereavement days allowed in a semester.

Policy Number 10: Dismissal from the Practicum Experience

Adopted: April 10, 2015

Policy: There may be times a student needs to be dismissed from their practicum experience due to unprofessional behavior, safety, or attendance issues.

Procedure:

1. In the event that a student is dismissed from a practicum site for issues related to unprofessional behavior, attendance, or unsafe practices, the College will investigate the situation and make a determination as to the student's status in the program.
2. If the College determines the student was dismissed for a valid cause, the College is under no obligation to reassign that student to another practicum.
3. Failure to complete the practicum course successfully will result in a failing grade and the ineligibility of the student to graduate from the program.

Policy Number 11: Grievance Policy

Adopted: April 10, 2015

Revised: February 7, 2017

Policy: The Practicum Grievance Policy enables students to work with Medical Coding program faculty to resolve problems that may arise at their practicum site in a fair and unbiased manner. If a student has a grievance regarding decisions made during their practicum, an appeal should be initiated as outlined below.

Procedure:

1. The student should first make every effort to resolve the problem/situation through open communication with the On-Site Practicum Coordinator within three (3) days of the initial incident.
2. If the student is not satisfied that the situation has been resolved he/she should present the problem in writing to the Medical Coding Practicum Coordinator at NECC within five (5) days of the initial incident.
3. After investigating the situation the Medical Coding Practicum Coordinator in collaboration with the Student Conduct Administrator will investigate the situation and will respond to the student in accordance with NECC Policy.
4. Should the student choose to file a grievance, the NECC grievance procedure will be followed.
5. The student may choose to cancel the grievance procedure at any point in the process by notifying the appropriate person, such as the NECC Practicum Coordinator or the College's Student Grievance Officer, in writing that he or she wishes to cancel the grievance process.

Policy Number 12: Leave of Absence

Adopted: April 10, 2015

Policy: The student may request a leave of absence (LOA) of up to one (1) calendar year from the Medical Coding Program.

Procedure:

The student's return date to the program will be dependent upon:

1. When practicum experience is being offered.
2. The availability of a vacancy at a practicum experience site.
3. The courses which were completed in the curriculum sequencing.
4. A student who fails to register for courses in the appropriate semester that follows the leave of absence must reapply for admission to their program after completing all program admission requirements. A student may continue with general education courses without modification or interruption.

Policy Number 13: Withdrawal from Program

Adopted: April 10, 2015

Revised: February 7, 2017

Policy: The student may choose to withdraw from the Medical Coding Program due to personal and or medical reasons.

Procedure:

1. The student must submit a letter of withdrawal to the Medical Coding Practicum Coordinator.
2. If the student chooses to completely withdraw from the college they will complete the "Withdrawal from College" form available at the NECC Registrar's Office.

Policy Number 14: Readmission to Medical Coding Certificate Program

Adopted: April 10, 2015

Policy: A student who has been dismissed or has withdrawn from the Medical Coding Program may be readmitted.

Procedure:

1. Only one readmission to the medical coding program is permitted. This readmission must occur within a one (1) calendar year time frame.
2. A student must apply to the Medical Coding Program Chair for readmission at least one semester before the desired date of return.
3. A student must request readmission in writing.
4. The student must achieve a score of 73% ("C") or more on a comprehensive examination covering all current subject matter presented in medical coding courses for which the student has previously received a passing grade.
5. A student repeating the Medical Coding Program's course must repeat all components of the course.
6. A student may be readmitted to the program only if space is available.
7. Extenuating circumstances will be evaluated individually for each student.

Policy Number 15: Cell Phone Use during Practicum

Adopted: April 10, 2015

Policy: The use of cell phones by students at practicum experience sites is prohibited.

Procedure:

1. Students may not bring their cell phones into any department of a practicum site (Medical Records, Quality Assurance, IT, etc.) during their practicum experience.
2. Students should store cell phones in a safe place while attending their clinical practicum.
3. Cell phones may be used during break.
4. Students will follow the cell phone policy provided by the practicum site.

5. Students will be provided with the telephone number of the practicum site to which they are assigned should they need to be contacted in the event of an emergency.

Policy Number 16: Service Work

Adopted: April 10, 2015

Policy: Students may not function in the practicum setting in place of paid employees. Students may be permitted to perform procedures under supervision in the practicum setting after demonstrating an appropriate level of proficiency.

Procedure:

1. Should a student be requested to perform such substitute employee duties they are asked to inform the NECC Practicum Coordinator immediately.
2. Health Information Management, Utilization Review, Risk Management, Quality Assurance, Information Systems or other departments in which students might serve practicum hours may have part-time positions available for students during evening or weekend hours. Students must be paid appropriately for those hours outside of their clinical practicum experience.
3. Though relevant work experience is encouraged, students are cautioned not to accept more than twenty (20) hours of work per week while enrolled in the Medical Coding Program.

SECTION IV: STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MEDICAL CODING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM
Agreement for Confidentiality

I understand that I am never to discuss or review any information regarding a patient at a clinical site unless the discussion or review is part of my assignment to the site. I understand that I am obligated to know and adhere to the privacy policies and procedures of the clinical site to which I am assigned. I acknowledge that medical records, accounting information, patient information, and conversations between or among healthcare professionals about patients are confidential under law and this agreement.

I understand that, before I use or disclose patient information in a learning experience, classroom, case presentation, class assignment, or research, I must exclude all protected patient information.

I understand that I must promptly report any violation of the clinical site's privacy policies and procedures, applicable law, or this confidentiality agreement, by me, or a student or faculty member to the appropriate clinical coordinator or program.

I understand that if I violate the privacy policies and procedures of the clinical site, applicable law, or this agreement, I will be subject to disciplinary action.

By signing this agreement, I certify that I have read and understand the terms and will comply with them.

Student Signature

Date

Printed Name

Student ID #

Medical Coding Program Handbook
Student Acknowledgement of Receipt
Northern Essex Community College

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and fully understand and agree to abide by the information, policies and procedures presented in the Medical Coding Certificate Program Handbook. I agree to abide by the professional behavior as outlined in this handbook. I understand that I am responsible for the information contained in this handbook. Any questions regarding the information contained in the Medical Coding Certificate Program Handbook have been answered to my satisfaction.

STUDENT NAME – SIGNATURE

DATE

STUDENT NAME (PRINTED)

APPENDIX A: NOTIFICATION TO STUDENTS

Random Drug Screening, CORI/SORI, and Immunization Release

APPENDIX B: FORMS

NECC Division of Health Professions Immunization Record Supplemental Form

NECC Massachusetts CORI / SORI Release Form

New Hampshire Criminal Records Release Authorization Form

NECC CORI / CHRI / SORI Payment Coupon

APPENDIX C: INCIDENT REPORT FORM & INSTRUCTIONS

Incident Report Form & Instructions

APPENDIX D: PRACTICUM COURSE SITE EVALUATION

MRT293 Medical Coding Practicum Evaluation Form

APPENDIX E: PRACTICUM FORMS & ASSESSMENTS

MRT293 Medical Coding Practicum Data Sheet

MRT 293 Medical Coding Confidentiality Agreement

MRT293 Student Evaluation Form