Specialized Certificate in Healthcare Information Technology: 
Frequently Asked Questions

Jump to information about... the certificate, the courses, or financial aid, or request more information.

About the Certificate

What is the program like?
Healthcare information technology (HIT) enables healthcare providers to better manage patient care through the private and secure use and sharing of health information. Created in large part by the current national initiative to implement and effectively use electronic health records (EHR). The demand for highly skilled Healthcare IT professionals continues to grow.

First launched in 2009, UC San Diego Extension’s Healthcare IT Certificate program provides graduates with comprehensive, up-to-date knowledge on EHR implementation and use, healthcare policies, and project management techniques deemed essential to success in the Healthcare IT field.

Taught by industry professionals, the program includes 200+ hours of instruction and practice, including a 60-hour Capstone Project that prepares students for the real-world demands on a HIT practitioner. The program also allows for customization, through a choice of electives based upon a student’s interests.

What are the learning objectives of the program?
- Gain a comprehensive understanding of current and future healthcare IT policies and technologies in order to be an effective member of an HIT Team
- Discover how to identify informatics needs in different healthcare settings and align them with currently available solutions
- Learn how to evaluate, select and deploy informatics solutions in healthcare sciences and delivery systems
- Acquire the skills needed to clearly and effectively communicate goals and objectives for information technology projects

What will I take away from this program?
You will get the strong technical training and interpersonal skill development that employers have deemed essential for success in the Healthcare IT field. You will examine the elements necessary for effective implementation of electronic health records and their integration in different healthcare environments. Upon completion of the program, you will qualify for many new healthcare-related
industry positions, created in large part by the current national initiative to implement electronic health records.

**Who should apply to the program?**
Clinicians, project managers, hospital administrators, information technologists, engineers, or technical writing, sales, marketing and human resources professionals in a healthcare field.

**Are there any prerequisites to the certificate program?**
There are three prerequisite courses for the program: *Introduction to U.S. Healthcare*, *Medical Terminology*, and *Overview of Medical Practice* (see certificate matrix on pg.2).

**Can any of the prerequisites be waived if I already have experience in the healthcare industry?**
Students with clinical backgrounds who are currently practicing in a clinical environment can apply to have the *Medical Terminology* course waived. To request a waiver, students must email Leslie Bruce with a description of their related education and current employment.

In addition, students that have completed a course substantially similar to *Introduction to US Healthcare* or *Overview of Medical Practice*, may apply to have credit transferred from their previous coursework. They must have taken the course within the past five years and earned at least a B. Students seeking to earn credit for course previously taken must submit to Leslie Bruce the syllabus from the prior course along with an official transcript. Only one course credit transfer is allowed per certificate.

**What courses must I take to complete the certificate?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Prerequisites (All 3 courses are required. Courses may be taken concurrently.)</strong></td>
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<td><em>Introduction to U.S. Healthcare</em></td>
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<td><em>Medical Terminology</em></td>
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<td><em>Overview of Medical Practice</em></td>
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<td><strong>Required Courses (The courses should be taken in the order suggested.)</strong></td>
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<td><em>Topics in Healthcare IT I</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Project Management in Healthcare IT</em></td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Topics in Healthcare IT II</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Healthcare IT Capstone Project</em></td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td><strong>Electives (Choose one.)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Computer Networking and Security Essentials</em></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Essential Elements of Health Information Exchange</em></td>
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<td>O</td>
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*O = Online course; X = San Diego/Online*

*Click on the name of any course above to view more information about it.*

**Can I customize the program for my interests?**
Yes! Available areas of customization are:

- Healthcare Analytics
Healthcare Analytics
Healthcare Analytics is an important issue for every healthcare organization as each moves to a value-based, accountable care model. Analytics will ultimately affect healthcare delivery from payment to post-acute care by helping to guide care more efficiently and effectively.

Healthcare Information Exchange & Interoperability
Better information exchange and interoperability will not only connect patient care between health organizations, thereby improving patient health, but also connect caregivers to the larger, evidence-based health system.

Network & Security
As healthcare technology continues to evolve and produce a plethora of sensitive data, the need for organizations to employ aggressive cybersecurity measures to protect patient information continues to grow.

*Subject to change.*

How do I apply to the certificate program?

**STEP 1:** If you have a My Extension account, skip to Step 2. If you do not have a My Extension account, go to myextension.ucsd.edu, click “Create an account” on the right side of the page, and follow the instructions to create an account. Once you have a My Extension account, continue to Step 2.

**STEP 2:** Click on the yellow “Apply Now” button on the certificate information page. Complete the required fields on the application. Then click the “Save” button. Once you have saved the application, the “Submit” button will appear. Click the “Submit” button to submit your application for review and consideration. Once submitted, your application cannot be changed. You can track the progress of your application at My Extension.

Is there an application fee?
There is no application fee; however, upon acceptance into the program, there will be a certificate fee. The certificate fee is currently $60.

Can I register for the certificate program at any time?
Yes, you may enroll in the program at any time. However, it is recommended that you enroll as soon as possible. The program curriculum may be updated at any time; if certificate requirements change, you must adhere to the curriculum at the time of your enrollment into the certificate.

Can this certificate program be completed entirely online?
Yes! This program is designed for you to take completely online in the convenience of your own home or office. All assignments and test/quizzes are completed online and submitted through Blackboard, our online learning platform.
The Capstone Project offered simultaneously in both a classroom and online format. Students have the option of working on a team project or may opt to collaborate with a selected healthcare organization to develop their own individual Capstone Project that meets their professional interests and career goals. See below for information about completing the Capstone Project if you are outside of the greater San Diego area.

**Is this certificate program open to non-California residents?**
Yes, the program is open to non-California residents. The tuition is the same for California residents as it is for non-California residents.

**If I work full-time, will I still be able to complete this program?**
Yes! Our programs are designed to be working-student friendly. Most of the courses are under 3 units.

**How much does the certificate cost?**
The total cost of the program is $4,425 to $4,970* including the prerequisite courses and the $60 certificate fee. Each course and the certificate fee are paid on an individual basis as you progress through the program. Textbooks are not included.

*Price subject to change and will vary based upon electives chosen.

**Do I need to pay for the program up-front?**
You do not need to pay for the entire program at once, but you will need to pay per class at the time of enrollment.

**How long does it take to complete the certificate?**
Most students choose a 9- or 12-month schedule. Prerequisite courses are offered four times per year, and students can complete all three prerequisite courses concurrently in the same quarter. You officially have five years from the date of your first HIT class to complete all requirements for the certificate. Suggested 9- and 12-month schedules are as follows:

**9-Month Schedule**

**Quarter 1 (Fall or Spring)**
- Introduction to US Healthcare (1 unit)
- Medical Terminology (1 unit)
- Overview of Medical Practice (1 unit)
- Topics in Healthcare IT I (3 units)

**Quarter 2 (Winter or Summer)**
- Project Management in Healthcare IT (2 units)
- Topics in Healthcare IT II (2 units)
- *Elective course (3-4 units)*

**Quarter 3 (Fall or Spring)**
• Healthcare IT Capstone Project (3 units)

12-Month Schedule

Quarter 1 (Winter or Summer)
• Introduction to US Healthcare (1 unit)
• Medical Terminology (1 unit)
• Overview of Medical Practice (1 unit)

Quarter 2 (Fall or Spring)
• Topics in Healthcare IT I (3 units)
• Project Management in Healthcare IT (2 unit)

Quarter 3 (Winter or Summer)
• Topics in Healthcare IT II (2 units)
• Elective course (3-4 units)

Quarter 4 (Fall or Spring)
• Healthcare IT Capstone Project (3 units)

If I am not in the San Diego area, how can I complete the Capstone Project?
You will have a unique opportunity to work independently on a project in your community. The class instructor and teaching assistant will assist you in identifying a suitable healthcare organization and project in your area, giving you the chance to develop a project with concrete deliverables that showcases your abilities to potential employers. Thereafter you will complete the project and develop a final report under the auspices of a mentor at the organization you have chosen and an advisor from the Healthcare IT program.

Will this program prepare me for a certification exam?
We do not align our program with any particular certification exam. Our programs are designed to provide students with knowledge that will make them valuable in the workforce.

Is the program accredited?
The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accredit UC San Diego. UC San Diego Extension —like all other UC San Diego schools, colleges, and departments— is accredited by WASC through the University. All courses and certificate programs offered by UC San Diego Extension have been developed and are administered in accordance with Extension policy and the regulations of the Academic Senate of the University of California.

How do I get my certificate once I have completed the requirements?
When you have paid your certificate fee and successfully completed all program requirements, you will need to notify Student Services by either:

• Calling Certificate Processing at (858) 534-3444
• Submitting the [Online Intent to Complete Certificate Program form](#)

Once you have formally notified Student Services, your certificate will be mailed to the address we have on file for you within two weeks.

**Do you provide job or internship placement?**

We do not offer job placement assistance. However, the Center for Life/Work Strategies has career resources for current job seekers. For more information, visit [extension.ucsd.edu/careers](http://extension.ucsd.edu/careers).

**About the Courses**

**When is each course offered?**

Please view the certificate matrix on the [Healthcare IT Certificate webpage](#) for the projected schedule of classes. The columns labeled “FA,” “WI,” “SP” and “SU” represent our academic quarters: Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer.

**Can I take a course without registering for the certificate?**

Yes, you may take any course without registering for the certificate provided you have fulfilled any and all prerequisites for the course.

**How long is each course?**

Each course generally runs from six to 11 weeks.

**What kind of credit do I earn? Is it accepted at other universities?**

You will earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from each course. The CEU is a uniform measure of non-credit continuing education learning experiences. One CEU is defined as ten contact hours of participation in a continuing education course. Employers, professional groups, licensing agencies, and others who routinely examine and evaluate individual accomplishments generally accept this unit of measure.

A CEU is not an academic unit and each individual academic institution decides whether or not to accept Extension’s CEUs. If you wish to transfer credit, it is your responsibility to confer with the receiving institution before enrolling.

**How many hours can I expect to spend studying outside of class time?**

Each student has their own learning style so this can vary greatly. As a rule of thumb, expect to spend an average of 2 hours studying for every hour you spend “in-class.”

**How are the online classes formatted?**

The online courses are asynchronous: they have a start and end date but all the lessons are uploaded on Blackboard, our online learning management system, so you can learn at your own pace. However, please be aware that you may have weekly assignments, quizzes, or tests that are due on specific dates.
Please click here to view a sample course tour to see if this format suits your learning style.

**What are the instructors’ credentials?**
UC San Diego Extension calls upon the expertise of working practitioners for its instruction. They have been selected not only for their education, but, just as importantly, for their experience in the practical application of their specialties, and their exceptional teaching skills. The program is taught by seasoned professionals and overseen by an advisory board of leaders in the Healthcare IT field. You can view the advisor list on the Healthcare IT certificate webpage.

**How do I communicate with the instructor(s) if I have a question?**
Each instructor has his/her own preferred method of communication and response policy. However, most instructors utilize email or the discussion board and will respond within 24-48 hours.

**Once I have enrolled in a course, when will I get online access to it?**
If you have enrolled at least three days before the course begins, generally you will have access starting on the first day of class. You should receive an email from Student Services with instructions for how to login to the course. If you have enrolled on or after the start date of the course, you will have access within 24-hours.

**What are my grading options for each course?**
If you plan to obtain a certificate, you must either take all courses for a letter grade or pass/no pass. You must earn a grade of at least a “C-” or a “Pass” in order to apply the associated units towards the certificate. A “Pass” grade is equivalent to “C-” work or better. Any courses taken as “Not for Credit” will not count towards the certificate.

**Will I get any hands-on experience in the program?**
Most courses combine theory with hands-on exercises.

**What are the required textbooks?**
Textbooks requirements are subject to change every quarter. Instructors will post the current text requirements/recommendations on their associated course enrollment page.

**Will I be able to order the required textbooks before the class begins?**
Yes, you can order the book(s) at any time if the instructors posts text requirements/recommendations on their associated course enrollment page. You may order books through the campus bookstore or online retailers, such as Amazon.com.

**After I enroll, how can I retrieve a receipt for my records?**
Login to the My Extension website and select “Documents” as the top of the page.

**How will I receive my final course grade?**
Once the course is completed, the instructor has 10 working days to submit your grades. Once grades have been posted, you can view and print them via My Extension.
What if I am having trouble with Blackboard or My Extension?
Please contact Student Services at 858-534-9999 or unex-reg@ucsd.edu if you experience any issues logging in to any of our systems.

Financial Aid

Is financial aid available?
Yes, there are various financial aid options available to students. Many options are detailed below, or for more information visit extension.ucsd.edu/financial or email unex-finassst@ucsd.edu.

Continuing Education Loans

UCSD Extension has established a business relationship with UC Approved Lenders. Students can compare loan details including interest rates, repayment options, applicable fees, etc. to assist in finding a lender that best meets your student loan needs by visiting http://extension.ucsd.edu/financial.

- The complete loan process is coordinated between the lender and the student. Please allow approximately 3 weeks to complete and receive your student loan funds. Students may visit the lender's website for more information and to apply online.
- We encourage you to contact your own bank to research all possible lending solutions. Students enrolled in Extension courses are not eligible for federally funded (Title IV) scholarships, grants, federal work study or FFELP loans.

Tuition Reimbursement/Company Support

Many San Diego companies sponsor employees to attend professional development programs as an integral part of the company's management development efforts. Contact your HR representative for more information about your Tuition Reimbursement program. Click here to learn more about Purchase Order Enrollments.

Employment Development Department

The Employment Development Department (EDD) provides a comprehensive range of employment and training services in partnership with state and local agencies/organizations. More information is available on their website at edd.ca.gov.

San Diego Workforce Partnership

Career Centers Located throughout San Diego County offer their communities comprehensive employment and training services benefiting both business and job seekers. More information is available on their website at workforce.org.

Veteran’s Benefits

Many of UC San Diego Extension’s certificate programs are approved for Veterans Education Benefits. Please click here for information about veteran’s benefits.
Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Funding
The federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) offers a comprehensive range of workforce development activities through statewide and local organizations. UC San Diego Extension is one of California's Eligible Training Providers. The Healthcare IT program is eligible to receive Individual Training Accounts through WIA Title I-B funds. Eligible jobseekers can receive up to $5000 to pay for the cost of education or training.

- For more information, visit the Individual Training Accounts webpage or visit one of the local One-Stop Career Centers.
- If you have already been to a one-stop career center, please contact Debbie McAuliffe at (858) 246-1032 or dmcauliffe@ucsd.edu. If you have no yet done so, please visit the San Diego Workforce Partnership’s website.

FASFA
Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) funds are limited to degree programs only, and cannot be used for courses or certificate fees at UCSD Extension.

How do I get more information?
For program specific questions, please visit Healthcare IT Certificate webpage, or contact the program representative at (858) 534-9358 or unex-healthcareit@ucsd.edu.

For administrative questions, please visit Student Services webpage or contact them at 858-534-3400 or unex-reg@ucsd.edu.