

SADDLEBACK COLLEGE
HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM
Health Sciences & Human Services Division
28000 Marguerite Parkway, Mission Viejo, CA 92692

Health Information Technology Student Handbook



Safiah Mamoon, M.S., RHIA, CPC
HIT Program Director / Department Chair
949.582.4974
smamoon@saddleback.edu

Laura Rutman
HIT Project Specialist
949.582.4731
lrutman@saddleback.edu

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I. HIT Program Information

General Information

The Health Information Technology (HIT) degree prepares the student for employment as a health information professional with the knowledge and skills to accurately code diagnoses and procedures for healthcare services provided to patients, and to collect, maintain, and analyze clinical data in electronic health records that physicians, nurses, and other healthcare staff rely on to deliver quality healthcare. The HIT associate degree program comprises of the 52.5-54.5 unit coursework plus the general education courses needed to get the associate degree. Since the associate degree in HIT is a high unit degree (more than 60 units), it typically takes longer than 2 years or 4 semesters to complete. Without any credit for prior learning, full-time students typically complete in 2.5 years, and part-time students complete in 3.5 years. The program provides training through didactic instruction and directed practice. Students are required to hold a valid basic life support CPR card for healthcare providers, complete a health clearance, drug screening, background check and carry professional liability insurance prior to commencing their directed practice.

To earn the Associate of Science (A.S.) Degree in Health Information Technology, students must complete both HIT department requirements and General Education requirements. A previous associate degree, bachelor's degree or higher degree does not automatically meet general education requirements. All outside transcripts must be evaluated toward Saddleback College's requirements. Please check out the details of the HIT program at Saddleback College by visiting the HIT website.

The most current Road Map is available in the Appendix and on the HIT website. Failure to follow the correct course sequence can delay graduation since most courses are only offered once a year.

Accreditation and Certification

Saddleback College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, located at 10 Commercial Blvd, Suite 204, Novato, CA 94949, (415) 506-0234. The ACCJC is authorized to operate by the U.S. Department of Education through the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

Student Satisfaction

- 100% of graduate respondents reported a high level of satisfaction with the health information technology program on a 2019 survey.
- 83% of AY 2019-2020 graduates were employed in the healthcare field within 1 year of graduation.

Employer Satisfaction

- 100% of employer respondents that have employed graduates of the health information technology program reported a high level of satisfaction on a 2019 survey.

Health Information Technology Program Mission

The mission of the HIT program at Saddleback College is to provide comprehensive and high-quality courses that enable students to become proficient and innovative health information professionals, and to prepare students to pursue advanced learning opportunities in the health information field and become lifelong learners.

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee for the Health Information Technology program is composed of health information management (HIM) professionals from several healthcare institutions, faculty, students, and alumni. The purpose of this committee is to review curriculum, policies, and procedures, and make recommendations to the faculty regarding the current practice of the HIM profession.

Occupations/Fields that the program will prepare the student to enter

- Revenue Cycle Management/Billing/Clinical Coding
- Health Information Management
- Health Data Analyst
- Practice Management
- Patient care registrar
- Health Information Education
- Clinical Documentation Improvement (CDI)
- Insurance Claims specialist
- Patient Portal education/liaison
- Medical office administration
- Quality Improvement analyst
- Help Desk
- Release of Information

For more information about HIT careers, see the interactive [AHIMA Career Map](#).

Competencies

- Data Content, Structure, and Standards
- Data Governance
- Revenue Cycle Management/Billing/Clinical Coding
- Performance Improvement
- Clinical Documentation Improvement
- Release of Information
- Privacy and Security of Health Information
- Healthcare Information Technologies
- Healthcare statistics, trends, reporting, and registries

Student Learning Outcomes

- Apply the knowledge of medical sciences (medical terminology, anatomy/physiology, pathology, and pharmacology) to accurately assign codes.
- Collect, maintain, and analyze health information for accuracy, completeness, and timeliness based upon compliance and regulation standards.
- Adhere to principles of legal, ethical, accreditation and certification standards as they relate to health information.
- Participate in planning, adoption, and use of technology healthcare settings to maximize patient safety and efficiencies.
- Participate in analyzing and reporting health data for the performance improvement, research, and revenue cycle management.
- Demonstrate the ability to work effectively as an individual and collaboratively in a group to resolve health information management challenges in a dynamic and innovative healthcare environment.

HIT Salary Ranges

- **National**

As of Jul 13, 2021, the average annual pay for a Healthcare Information Technology in the United States is \$75,775 a year.

[Salary Information/Zip Recruiter](#)

[Salary Information - AHIMA](#)

- **State of California**

The average health information technology salary in California is \$68,000. However, salaries can vary by location. Technology-friendly Silicon Valley cities tend to offer higher salaries, with average salaries of \$108,000 in San Francisco and San Jose, while the average salary in Los Angeles is \$98,000.

Salaries also vary significantly depending on your workplace. Health information technology professionals employed by the federal government often make more than those employed by hospitals, nursing homes, or private physicians' offices.

Skills and experience also matter. Health information technicians with a strong understanding of computer science, coding, and software are likely to be in particularly high demand and can command higher salaries. Regardless of these differences, however, all health information technicians are likely to benefit from the tremendous projected growth in this exciting new field.

Please see [Salary.com](#)

Tuition, Fees, and Program Costs

Tuition charges and course fees are subject to change. If tuition increases, it usually occurs at the start of fall semester. Saddleback tuition is different for residents and nonresidents. The listed tuition and fees are based on the current academic year and are based on the minimum completion requirements of the program. Actual cost can vary based on the number of courses taken.

Tuition/Fees	HIT A.S. Degree* (79.5 units)
Tuition @ \$46/Unit	\$2,760
Application Fee (non-refundable)	\$54
Books (Avg. \$100/Course)	\$3,000
Health Fee (\$22/Semester x 4)	\$88
AHIMA Virtual Lab Fee (\$195/Year x 2)	\$390
AHIMA Membership (\$49/Year x 2) <small>* Highly recommended but not required</small>	\$98
Professional Practice Experience (PPE) Expenses	
-Medical Clearance and Immunizations	\$150
-Student Medical Liability Insurance	\$22
-Background Investigation Fee	\$50
-CPR (BLS)	\$50
Total	\$6,564

Field trips

These may be used to provide educational experiences unavailable on campus. Any costs incurred with field trips are the responsibility of the student.

II. AHIMA Code of Ethics

The HIM professional has an obligation to demonstrate actions that reflect values. The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) Code of Ethics sets forth these principles. The code is relevant to all AHIMA members, non-members with the Commission on Certification for Health Informatics and Information Management (CCHIIM) certifications, and students enrolled in a formal certificate or degree granting program directly relevant to AHIMA's Purpose regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve. These purposes strengthen the HIM professional's efforts to improve overall quality of healthcare.

The AHIMA Code of Ethics serves six purposes:

- Promotes high standards of HIM practice.
- Summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values.
- Establishes a set of ethical principles to be used to guide decision-making and actions.
- Establishes a framework for professional behavior and responsibilities when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
- Provides ethical principles by which the general public can hold the HIM professional accountable.
- Mentors' practitioners new to the field to HIM's mission, values, and ethical principles. The code includes principles that are enforceable and aspirational. The extent to which each principle is enforceable is a matter of professional judgment to be exercised by those responsible for reviewing alleged violations of ethical principles.

Principles

The following principles are based on the core values of the American Health Information Management Association and apply to all AHIMA members, non-members CCHIIM certifications, and students.

1. Advocate, uphold, and defend the consumer's right to privacy and the doctrine of confidentiality in the use and disclosure of information.
2. Put service and the health and welfare of persons before self-interest and conduct oneself in the practice of the profession so as to bring honor to oneself, their peers, and to the health information management profession.
3. Preserve, protect, and secure personal health information in any form or medium and hold in the highest regard health information and other information of a confidential nature obtained in an official capacity, considering the applicable statutes and regulations.
4. Refuse to participate in or conceal unethical practices or procedures and report such practices.
5. Use technology, data, and information resources in the way they are intended to be used.
6. Advocate for appropriate uses of information resources across the healthcare ecosystem.
7. Recruit and mentor students, peers, and colleagues to develop and strengthen professional workforce.
8. Represent the profession to the public in a positive manner.
9. Advance health information management knowledge and practice through continuing education, research, publications, and presentations.
10. Perform honorably health information management association responsibilities, either appointed or elected, and preserve the confidentiality of any privileged information made known in any official capacity.
11. State truthfully and accurately one's credentials, professional education, and experiences.
12. Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration in situations supporting ethical health information principles.
13. Respect the inherent dignity and worth of every person.

See the [AHIMA Code of Ethics](#) for more information.

Attributes

This field involves maintaining legal compliance, patient safety and cost effectiveness, maintaining large databases containing treatment and patient information data. A HIM professional processes, analyzes, maintains all the necessary medical documentation, and ensures that it is current, accurate, and in compliance with privacy laws and ethical standards. The HIM professional must have the following attributes:

- Strong analytical skills.
- Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written.
- Very detail oriented.
- Excellent interpersonal skills.
- Strong leadership skills.
- Technical skills.
- Computer skills.

III. Courses and Program Requirements

See HIT Roadmap in Appendix.

- **HSC 104 - Medical Terminology (3 units)** - Includes basic structure of medical terms and components. Builds a medical vocabulary applicable to specialty fields, major diseases, physical examination terms, diagnosis and treatment.
- **ENG 1A - Principles of Composition (4 units)** - Focuses on writing expository and argumentative essays; concentrates on rhetorical strategies, narrowing a topic, framing a thesis, using texts and establishing coherence and unity. - **OR** - **ENG 1AH - Honors Principles of Composition (4 units)** - Focuses on writing expository prose, with emphasis on the argumentative essay, and concentrates on rhetorical strategies, narrowing a topic, framing a thesis, using texts (including interdisciplinary scholarly content), and establishing coherence and unity.
- **CIM 1 - Computer Information Systems (4 units)** –Examination of computer information systems and their role in business including computer hardware and software, communications and networking concepts, programming techniques, e-commerce, ethics and security, database management systems, Internet usage, and system and application software. Students apply these concepts and methods through hands-on projects to develop computer-based solutions to business problems. - **OR** - **CIM 10 - Introduction to Information Systems (3 units)** –An introductory concepts and applications software course. Emphasis on hardware and software analysis and design of computers and other types of information systems used for creating, maintaining, retrieving, printing, and communicating computer files. Exercises using word processing, spreadsheet, database, graphics, and communications software and an introduction to the Internet. Provides the experience necessary to recognize the major capabilities available in each

software application and how the software applications work together in an integrated information systems environment.

- **HIT 100 - Information Science (2 units)** –Introduction to the health information management profession. A brief off-campus site visit is required to meet the objectives of this course.
- **HSC 107 - Human Body Fundamentals (3 units)** –Intro to the structure and function of the human body. Includes structural components, spatial relationships, and body system interactions. Satisfies requirements for Health Information Technology and EMT, but will not fulfill requirements for nursing, physician assistant, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or pre-pharmacy majors. - **OR**
- **BIO 113 - Human Anatomy and Physiology (4 units)** - Examines the relationships between human anatomical and human physiological systems.
- **HSC 106 - Legal & Ethical Aspects (3 units)** – Legal and ethical issues pertaining to health care, health information, and health records. Privacy, patient rights, security, release of informed consents, advance directives, compliance, fraud and abuse, documentation requirements, medical malpractice, labor laws, HIPAA and other regulations, and E-health.
- **HIT 101 - Alternative Healthcare Delivery Systems (2 units)** –Management of health information in the various delivery systems, other than the acute care hospital setting including home health, hospice, behavioral health, long-term care, rehabilitation and facilities, and managed care. Focuses on the structure and content of the records: flow of information, requirements, and reimbursement.
- **CIMW 105 – Web Development and DB Intro SQL and MYSQL (3 units)** - Introduction to databases, web database development and SQL query language. Course uses MySQL or MariaDB to create, manipulate, and query databases and tables. Covers the fundamentals of database design including triggers, constraints, PLSQL, basic selection queries, sub-queries, joins and data manipulation language.
- **HIT 111 - Healthcare Information Technologies (3 units)** –Healthcare Information technologies used in the management of health information; communication and network technologies; data and information file structures; health data collection tools, health information exchanges, data and interchange standards, consumer informatics, data integrity and security.
- **HSC 108 - Disease Processes for Health Sciences (3 units)** –A conceptual approach to the study of disease processes including common assessment strategies and treatments with an emphasis on the body's response to the disease process.
- **HIT 109 - ICD Diagnostic Coding (3 units)** –An overview of the organization and format of the ICD diagnostic coding and its role in the Prospective Payment System. Instruction in diagnostic coding of health records by applying ICD guidelines. Students will use specialized software for the completion of the HIM processes with emphasis on encoders and groupers.
- **HIT 110 - ICD Procedure Coding (3 units)** –Teaches procedural coding by teaching the guidelines of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) procedure manual and applying them to health records. Students will use specialized software for the completion of the Health Information processes with emphasis on encoders and groupers.

- **MATH 10 – Introduction to Statistics (3 units)** - The use of probability techniques, hypothesis testing, and predictive techniques to facilitate decision-making. Topics include descriptive statistics; probability and sampling distributions; statistical inference; correlation and linear regression; analysis of variance, chi-square, and t-tests - **OR** - **PSYC 44 (3 units)– Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences** - Introduces psychology and behavioral science majors to descriptive and inferential statistical methods that are essential to the understanding, interpretation, and performance of scientific research.
- **CIMA 288 – Database Reporting (3.5 units)** – Provides students with the knowledge and skills to turn raw data into business intelligence through use of tools such as Microsoft Power BI and Tableau. Students will create data visualizations, dashboards and reports that can be analyzed and shared. Students will create basic data models by connecting to various data sources.
- **HIT 119 - Management of Resources (3 units)** –Leadership, training, teamwork, motivation, staffing and productivity, communication, performance review, tools and techniques for process improvement, budgets, development of policies and procedures, data collection and analysis for strategic planning, information governance, workflow, and process monitors.
- **HIT 116 - Performance Improvement in Healthcare (3 units)** - An introduction to the quality management and performance improvement process in health care settings, and focuses on collecting, analyzing, and presenting data. The course covers introduction to quality management techniques and tools, patient safety, accreditation, utilization and risk management.
- **HIT 115 - CPT/Ambulatory Care Coding (3 units)** - Addresses the utilization of Current Procedural Terminology (CPT-4) and Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) codes for hospital outpatient, physician, and other ambulatory services. Analysis of medical documentation and application of guidelines for coders and health information professionals.
- **HIT 122 - Reimbursement Methodologies (3 units)** –Explores health insurance billing and payment methodologies in various healthcare settings. Focuses on compliance with regulatory requirements and common reimbursement practices. Students will also learn how payers and quality review organizations utilize data.
- **HIT 130 - Directed Practice (4 units)** -Examines the structure, content, and utilization of health information as it relates to the Health Information Department of an affiliated health care organization. The focus is on the organization, flow of information, functions of the information department, and other associated departments.

IV. Applying to the HIT Program

The Health Information Technology (HIT) Program is fully online. Please see the steps below to enroll in the program.

Saddleback College / IVC Student ID:

- Students must have a Saddleback College/IVC student ID # to apply. If you do not have one, please apply to the college [here](#).

Counseling:

- For advising regarding our Health Information Technology Program, or Certificates in Medical Coding or Healthcare Technology Optimization Specialist, you can connect with the program counselor Elizabeth Weiss by scheduling an appointment. To do so, please call our Counseling Office at **949-582-4572**, we begin scheduling appointments every business morning at 8 am. Counseling appointments will be released 7 days in advance.
- To be added to our Counselor Call Back list for a quick 15-minute question regarding the program, call us at (949) 582-4572 or e-mail us at sc-ecounselor@saddleback.edu. In your message include your name, student ID number, and a brief description/question for the counselor, be sure to be specific that you would need to speak to the Health Information Technology program counselor, and for which program you would like information on. The call back hours for this program are Tuesdays 10-11 am & 1-2 pm or Wednesdays from 10:30-11:30 am, 1:30-2:30 pm or 4:30-5:30 pm. You may also visit our Zoom lobby Monday- Thursday 8 am to 5 pm to be added to our callback list. Please [click here](#) to enter. Please [view online counseling appointment instructions here](#).

Transcripts:

- Official relevant transcripts from outside colleges other than Saddleback College/IVC must be sent to the [Admissions & Records office](#)
- See the link on [How to Order an Official Transcript](#)
- International transcripts must be evaluated by an acceptable third party, NACES, at: <https://www.naces.org/member>

Petition For Course Substitution Or Waiver:

- All course petitions (if applicable) for credit of courses taken outside of Saddleback/IVC should be submitted. Please meet with a counselor to petition for the courses. CIM, BIO, MATH, PSYC courses belong to different departments and need to be on separate forms. Here is the link to the [Petition for Course Substitution/Waiver Form](#). You will be uploading your **unofficial transcripts** as part of this application.
- **For HIT AS degree only:** to earn the Associate of Science (A.S.) Degree in Health Information Technology, students must complete **both** HIT department requirements and General Education requirements. A previous associates, bachelors or higher degree does not automatically meet general

education requirements. All outside transcripts must be evaluated toward Saddleback College's requirements.

Student Application Form:

- For the initial steps and documents needed to start the HIT program or the certificates in Medical Coding Specialist or Healthcare Technology Optimization Specialist (HCTOS), please see the Submittable link on the HIT website and set up an account. You do not have to complete or submit the online application form in one sitting. You can start the process and continue with the application at any time before you submit. Once submitted, you will be notified about your application in 2 weeks.

Notifications:

- Please check your Submittable account/email used to sign up with for all communication regarding your application.
- Students will need to check Saddleback College emails daily even if they are not taking courses in a particular semester as important updates are sent to the students throughout the program.

V. Failing, Withdrawal, Leave of Absence, and Readmission into the Program

Courses have repeatability restrictions and students may not be able to repeat courses more than twice. Please check the repeatability status of the course related to failing grades or withdrawals. All students must make appointments with the Counselor every semester to make sure that they are on track. Many of the courses are only offered once a year.

Students are encouraged to discuss their class status with the instructor or Department Chair/Program Director before withdrawing from the course or taking a leave of absence (LOA) from the program. A break of more than one semester will result in the student losing catalog rights and having to reapply to the program which may have changed and may involve additional courses since HIT is an evolving field.

If the program has not changed, a student may re-apply to the program after a leave of absence of no more than one year without repeating the courses. Readmission requests would need to be done within appropriate timelines and would be reviewed by committee which includes the Department Chair and HIT faculty. This process may take 2-3 weeks and student will be notified by email about the status of readmission into the HIT program. Failure to follow the guidelines and processes may prevent the student from progressing and completing the program.

VI. Professional Practicum Experience (PPE)

In the last semester of the HIT Program per the road map, eligible students will be placed in an on-site, 50-hour externship or PPE at one of Saddleback College's contracted facilities if they have satisfactorily completed the requirements of the program. Several clearances will be needed including **health and background clearances, drug screening, health insurance and liability coverage** to be eligible for externship. Significant findings may affect the student's ability to progress through or complete the program. California Department of Public Health (CDPH) requires students who are placed at healthcare facilities and are working to be fully immunized with the Covid-19 vaccine. Proof of vaccination status must be provided for a health clearance. Students who refuse or cannot pass the clinical requirements (including medical or religious declinations) will receive a Not Qualified for Placement. Not Qualified for Placement status means students may not be eligible for placement at a site and may not be able to complete the program. Note: California Department of Public Health (CDPH) requires students who are placed at healthcare facilities be fully immunized with the Covid-19 vaccine.

Please see the [HIT Clinical Practicum Requirements](#) webpage for details. Students are advised to start the clearance process six months in advance of placement. For questions please [email Laura Rutman](#) or call 949-582-4701.

The externship is part of HIT 130 (Directed Practice) which is offered once a year in the Spring semester. In addition to the 50-hour clinical rotation with an affiliated site, HIT 130 has a 3-unit, online didactic portion consisting of discussion boards, and other assignments. The 50 hours at the clinical site is during the business hours of operation. Students must be able to commit a minimum of 15 hours per week for the rotation. The maximum hours per week cannot exceed 40 hours per week. Students must plan accordingly.

Only eligible students will be able to enroll via an Add Permit Code (APC). The process of preliminary determination of eligibility will start in the Fall semester before the Spring start of HIT 130.

There are 2 main requirements for eligibility for HIT 130:

1. Successful completion of **all** coursework offered in the semesters prior to the last semester in which HIT 130 is offered per roadmap. HIT 122 is the **only** course that can be taken along with HIT 130 unless the requirements of HIT 122 were completed earlier. **There are no exceptions.** Transcripts will be checked for courses completed and those which are in-progress.
2. Documentation of all clearances by the deadline date of December 1st required for compliance to be placed at clinical site.

Compliance Steps and Deadlines for Enrolling into HIT 130

1. Students need to meet with the Counselor every semester from the beginning of the program to ensure that the correct course sequence per the HIT Road ,ap is being followed. All **official** transcripts of courses taken outside Saddleback College/IVC must be on file.
2. Students must keep track of their coursework and eligibility for HIT 130. Students must create an account with CastleBranch and start uploading the required clearances starting June 1st prior to their possible eligibility for the Spring HIT 130, and complete by December 1st since it can take 6 months to complete all the clearances especially, the health clearance.

Students can see the [HIT Clinical Practicum Requirements](#) webpage for information on the CastleBranch clearance process and PPE Manual. It is the student's responsibility start their clearances by June 1st if they are on track to meeting all the course eligibility requirements. All clearances must be current (and not expired for the entire duration of the Spring externship. Any expired clearances will need to be repeated.

3. The compliance requirements may include the following: health requirements, immunizations including Covid-19, background check, drug testing, physical exams, professional liability coverage, health insurance and so forth. No student may vary from these requirements without assistant dean or dean approval. All clearance processes must be completed and uploaded in CastleBranch by **December 1st. Students who refuse or cannot pass the clinical requirements will receive a Not Qualified for Placement by the Student Health Center.**
4. Student compliance will be tracked and monitored after December 1st. Students must comply **before** being assigned to a facility and under no circumstances be in a facility without fully documented clearances. Failure to complete any of the clearances in a timely manner will delay program completion. ***See details on background checks below.***
5. Final eligibility will be determined after the end of the Fall semester via the transcript showing successful completion of **all** required courses, enrollment in HIT 122 (if it was not completed earlier), and documentation of compliance requirements.
6. An APC for HIT 130 will be emailed to eligible students by January 7th and students must enroll in a timely manner. Students must add themselves to the HIT 130 waitlist to get an APC.

Students will be placed at a Saddleback College's contracted site **based on availability of the site and number of slots allowed per site.** Placement can never be guaranteed as sites may change their minds at the last minute with changes in their situation. Saddleback College is grateful to have healthcare sites that are willing to assist with the program and allow HIT students the opportunity to complete externship hours under their expert guidance. Every effort will be made to match the students with sites, based upon commute and work schedule. However, the sites' available schedule, staffing, and training capabilities need to be taken into consideration. In general, sites do not take students in the evenings or weekends. Sites may have their own internal processes before allowing the student to start the clinical rotation.

The HIT Department Chair may contact the student just before the start of the HIT 130 course regarding the externship site. This may include information about the location of the site and the contact information of the person who will do the training. Students must contact that person to discuss start date, weekly schedule (20 hours minimum) and the projected end date.

Failure to meet all requirements (coursework, clearances, etc.) by the deadlines provided may prevent the student from enrolling into HIT 130 until the next year. In that case, the clearances may need to be repeated because of recency requirements.

Rationale for Background Check

Having a felony/misdemeanor conviction may preclude an applicant from beginning or a student from continuing in the program due to the inability to participate in the off-site educational component of the program, which is a condition of our affiliation agreements.

Background Check Procedure

Students must complete an online background check and drug test with the approved vendor designated by the HSHS Division. All issues reported from this vendor will be directed to the appropriate designee in the HSHS Division office or the appropriate personnel at the educational affiliate site who shall maintain student confidentiality per FERPA and California privacy law. Results from vendors other than those designated by the Division of Health Sciences to conduct criminal background checks will not be accepted. Applicants/students must contact the designated vendor(s) and comply with instructions for authorizing and obtaining criminal background checks.

Reporting Results

- **Negative Criminal Background Checks** - The names of all applicants and current students with negative criminal background checks will be forwarded to the assigned designee in the Division of Health Sciences and Human Services with the date of the criminal background check. No further action by the applicant/student or Division is required. Background information is sensitive, and only authorized personnel have access to records.
- **Affirmative Duty to Disclose** - Students who have completed a background, have been accepted into the program and will be placed at an off-site affiliate, have an affirmative duty to disclose any changes to their backgrounds. This includes any charges that are above a misdemeanor traffic citation. The student must report to the chair and assistant dean or dean within 24 hours of an incident.

Current felony/misdemeanor convictions shall be made known within 24 hours of the conviction as evidenced by court documentation to the Dean or Assistant Dean of Health Sciences and Human Services.

The assistant dean or dean (or designee) shall meet with the student within two business days.

- **Positive Criminal Background Checks** - Any applicant/student whose report indicates a positive result in their criminal background check will receive notification by email and certified letter from the HSHS Division office within seven (7) business days. Applicants/students are required within seven (7) business days of the emailed notification to schedule a time to discuss the findings with the assistant dean or dean/designee in the HSHS Division. Following that meeting, the

applicant/student will be notified of the decision within seven (7) business days regarding whether the applicant/student may continue or begin the program or be dismissed from the program in which they are enrolled. Any variation of this policy must be approved in advance by the assistant dean or dean.

Clinical Site – Policies and Expectations

- 1. Attendance and Absences** - 100% attendance and punctuality are required during the externship period. Absenteeism and tardiness are considered unprofessional and undesirable traits. While there may be times when a student may be absent due to illness or other valid reasons, it is the student's responsibility to make up the time, per school policy and at the discretion of the site. If a student is unable to work on a specified day, it is his or her responsibility to notify and set up arrangements to make up the missed time with both the PPE site manager and academic PPE coordinator. Students must complete 50 hours at the clinical site.

Although every effort should be made to arrive at the site on time, if a student is running late, the PPE site manager must be contacted with an estimated arrival time. If departing early, be sure the arrangement is agreed to by the PPE site manager, and that a later visit is arranged to make up missed hours. Should the site suggest early departure due to lack of activities, make suggestion such as reviewing department policies/procedures so as not to lose on site hours. Excessive absenteeism and tardiness will likely adversely affect the student's grade for the PPE course.

A student's absence places burdens on the clinical site's HIM department. The staff is prepared for the student's arrival and their schedules have been adjusted accordingly. Students must strive to maintain positive relationships with externship sites.

- 2. Appearance** – Students are expected to adhere to the facility's dress code. Although students have a general right to express individuality through dressing and grooming, employers have a right to refuse a student who does not conform to their dress code or meet professional standards.

Students should ask if there are questions regarding proper attire and appearance and discuss them with the academic program director or site manager.

- 3. Attitude and Conduct** - Clinical externships provide students an invaluable opportunity to learn new skills and refine skills they already have under the supervision of HIM professionals who are committed to helping the HIM professionals of the future. These dedicated people do not receive any additional compensation even though their hours and workload are increased by mentoring HIT students. Your appreciation of this fact and resulting grateful attitude will be critical to the success of this experience.

A strong desire to learn while contributing to the mission of the organization, along with a positive outlook, will help make this a good experience for you. Students should treat all externship site employees and HIM professionals and staff with respect, and work in a spirit of cooperation, collaboration, and teamwork. It is not unusual for a clinical experience to turn into a job or an excellent reference for job applications in the future.

Students should demonstrate initiative by completing activities as assigned, asking appropriate questions for clarification as needed and/or research as necessary from prior educational materials to complete assignments.

The expectation of professional behavior in class and during externships cannot be overemphasized. ***Ethical, professional, courteous, and appropriate behavior and speech is always expected.*** HIT students represent Saddleback College, the Health Sciences & Human Services Division, the HIT Program, and the HIM profession, and therefore must conduct themselves accordingly. When you enter a relationship with a clinical site, you are being evaluated not only for your performance, but also for the quality of your education, your communication and interpersonal skills, and your preparation for working in a professional environment. Students need to follow [AHIMA Code of Ethics](#) and the site's policies.

4. **Safety** – Students must adhere to all patient safety and emergency preparedness policies, including fire safety, active shooter, earthquake, and other weather-related preparedness guidelines.
5. **Electronic Communication** – These include phone calls, texting, chatting, emails, and social media activity.
 - **Personal Communications:** Please follow the clinical site's policy on personal communication during on site hours. Generally, these should only be conducted during designated break periods unless a legitimate emergency exists.
 - **Employment Related Communications:** Please check and follow site guidelines. Many students have jobs outside of their school responsibilities that require communication with their employer. However, it is not appropriate to conduct business related to your employment during your externship, except during designated break periods. Your job responsibilities should not interfere with your externship. If this is not possible, then this may not be the right time for you to participate in a clinical externship.
 - **Social Media, Websites, and Devices:** Most clinical sites will have restrictions on the use of social media websites and devices during the clinical rotation. Avoid sharing or disseminating confidential information about patients, HIPAA-protected information, and FERPA protected information.
 - **Unauthorized recording:** The use by any person, including a student, of any electronic listening or recording device in any classroom without the prior consent prohibited, except as necessary to provide reasonable auxiliary aids and academic adjustments to disabled students. Any person, other than a student who willfully violates this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.
6. **Privacy and Security** – Students must respect the confidentiality of patient information regardless of the source. Any violation of the clinical site's privacy and security policy, HIPAA, or the HIT program Performance Agreement will be grounds for disciplinary action. A violation of the clinical externship site's privacy and security policies will result in termination of the student's externship at the discretion of the Site Supervisor.
7. **Failing Grade, Withdrawal, or Leave of Absence from Clinical Rotations** - A student who enrolls into HIT 130 will need to complete the 50-hour rotation at the clinical and the didactic (online) portion of the course within the semester. If the student gets a failing grade (below 70%) or withdraws from the course, **then the student will need to wait until HIT 130 is offered the following year to repeat. In that case, the clearances may expire and need to be repeated due to recency requirements.**

A student who is unable to complete the 50-hours of the clinical rotation **after** starting the on-site hours and has completed most of HIT 130 in good standing must notify the HIT Department Chair in writing of a valid reason for a “Leave of Absence” (LOA) pending approval for the LOA to receive an Incomplete Grade. If a LOA is granted, student is required to finish the clinical hours within a year of the LOA and complete HIT program. Clearances may expire and may need to be repeated.

Inappropriate behavior that may result in dismissal from the clinical site and/or failing grade for the course include:

- Safety violations
- HIPAA violations
- Cheating
- Copyright violations
- Fraud, dishonesty
- Unexcused absences
- Excessive tardiness
- Leave of Absence breaches
- Ditching (an externship site early without permission)
- Profane language
- Sexual harassment
- Damaging property
- Illegal or inappropriate use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Theft
- Poor hygiene
- Failure to report injuries
- Failure to follow school or clinical externship site policies or procedures
- Disobedience to clinical externship site personnel

Should problems arise during the externship; the PPE Coordinator will make every effort to resolve the situation with the student and the Site Supervisor. If it is not practical to resolve a scheduling problem, the PPE Coordinator has the discretion to reassign the student to another externship site based upon availability. However, inappropriate behaviors such as the ones listed above may result in a failing grade for the course and/or dismissal from the clinical site.

The dismissed/failing student may be allowed a remediation process to allow a re-enrollment into HIT 130 for the following year when it is offered again. In that case, the clearances may expire and need to be repeated due to recency requirements.

See Section E. Failing, Withdrawal, Leave of Absence, and Readmission into the Program

VII. HIT Program Policies and Expectations

Catalog and Student Handbook

Students will be held accountable to the HIT Student Handbook and Saddleback College Handbook, including all policies and procedures and system policies that are outlined.

Progression

To progress through the Health Information Technology program, a student must achieve a grade of “C” or better (a minimum of 70 percentage points) in every course in the Health Information Technology curriculum. If a student earns a “D” or “F” in any HIT curriculum course, student will be allowed to retake the course **one time** unless exceptions are approved by the HIT Department Chair/Program Director. See Section E. Failing, Withdrawal, Leave of Absence, and Readmission into the Program

HIT Grading policy

- A = 90%-100%
- B = 80%-89%
- C = 70%-79%
- D = 60%-69% - Fail HIT course
- F = Below 60% - Fail HIT course

Unauthorized Recording

The use by any person, including a student, of any electronic listening or recording device in any classroom without the prior consent of the instructor is prohibited, except as necessary to provide reasonable auxiliary aids and academic adjustments to disabled students. Any person, other than a student who willfully violates this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Emails

Students must use only the Saddleback College email and not personal emails. The HIT program requires that students check their Saddleback email regularly. Important updates and notifications are sent throughout the program and students need to stay connected even if they are not enrolled in courses for any period of time.

Students must use the Canvas inbox for the course they are emailing about. Personal emails will not get responses. Students should include:

1. Module number, and the exact assignment being referred to in the body of the email.
2. Phone number since the instructor may need to speak to the student.
3. It is best to create a customized signature for email that includes name, student ID, and phone number.
4. For general questions not relating to a particular course, please use college email.

Changes in Name, Telephone Number and/or Address

Any change of name, address, or telephone number must be done through MySite. Also notify division office so changes can be made in the files.

Length of Time Required to Graduate

The length of time it will take to graduate depends on a few factors: how many classes you are comfortable taking each semester; the sequencing of courses; and if you are able to get into the classes you need. Please note that because of the considerable number of students trying to get into our classes, it can be incredibly challenging to get into required courses in your major in your first semester. This is because as a new student your priority registration date will come after all continuing students. In addition, the associate degree in HIT is a high unit degree (more than 60 units) which typically takes longer than 2 years or 4 semesters to complete. Without any credit for prior learning, full-time students typically complete in 2.5 years, and part-time students complete in 3.5 years. All these factors can extend the time that it will take to complete your program by one or two semesters. 100% of first-time students who graduated in AY 2019-2020 completed the program within 150% time typically required to complete.

Managing Work and School

When deciding how many units to take, it is important to plan time for reading, studying, and preparing for those classes. No time is given “in class” for studying. You are expected to be ready for each class before the class period begins. The recommended formula to determine expected amount of TOTAL TIME required for success in a class is as follows:

Schedule 2-3 hours per unit, per week for studying.

Example: 3-unit class –
In-class time = 3 hours per week
Study time = 6 hours per week
(3 units x 2 hrs./unit study = 6 hours)

TOTAL TIME: 9 HOURS PER WEEK FOR A 3-UNIT CLASS

If you take 12 units, total time to budget is 36 hours (about 1 and a half days) per week. That is why 12 units is considered full-time-student status. You may take as little as .5 units or as many as 19 units during a single semester. To take more than 19 units (not including work experience or independent study) you are required to obtain special permission from the Counseling Division. You must have a cumulative 3.0 grade point average to gain permission to enroll in more than 19 units.

Recommended combination:

<u>Work</u>	<u>School</u>
5-15 hours per week.	12-15 units
20 hours per week.	9-12 units
30 hours per week.	6-9 units
40 hours per week.	3-6 units

Do not overload yourself when you register for classes. Design a course load that is reasonable for your level of energy and motivation.

VIII. Grievance Process

Students who wish to file a grievance may follow due process guidelines found in the program's handbook (informal) and/or District AP 5530 (formal). The three scenarios described below trigger HSHS due process (See Figure 1.1)

Formal AP 5530

The District AP 5530 is the formal grievance process and is applicable District's enumerated issues (i.e., grades, student disciplinary actions). Students have the option to use the HSHS informal process before using the formal District process.

Program Formal Grievance Process

Student conduct may initiate sanctions and grievances processes that are not covered under the District AP 5530. This occurs when a student breaches the department policies and regulations (i.e., dismissals for patient safety violations, failures in the remediation processes, HIPAA violations, LOA breaches, re-admission denials and so on). The procedural due process outlined below ensures both fair and equitable outcomes for all health science students.

Dual Grievance Processes

Students should be aware that parallel process for disciplinary matters can occur, and they must file appeals through both processes. For example, if a student is impaired and cannot perform safely at a clinical site, AP 5530 is triggered along with the program's policy (i.e., breach of behaviors at the clinical site, violation of

patient safety). In such a case, a student could be dismissed from the program while also going through the District disciplinary process and receiving District related sanctions. In these cases, students may need to address the District disciplinary process and grievance procedures while also activating the HSHS grievance process for a program dismissal.

Deans, directors, and chairs will assist students when separate grievance process this occurs and how to proceed through the processes. The Health Sciences and Human Services guidelines outlined below are instituted to ensure students receive procedural due process ensuring both fair and equitable outcomes for all health science students.

Students have a right to continue in their educational progress. No student may be “dismissed” from a program unless the Assistant Dean or Dean have been notified and the student has been afforded due process. Notwithstanding that a student may be removed from a clinical site and would fail the course, students may not be compelled to drop or withdraw a course.

Formal Grievance Process

1. Students who have a grievance should first address the issue with his/her faculty member within five (5) instructional days of when the event occurred or when the student became aware of the issue. The student must inform the director/chair/dean of a possible negative effect due to a five-day delay and ask for an expedited review. If additional time is necessary to complete a full investigation, the student will be informed.
2. The process may be accelerated due to exigent circumstances. The student, faculty, and/or director should inform all individuals if a fast-track process is needed and explicitly agree upon a timeline that will not irreparably harm the student’s progress in the program. All efforts should be made not to negatively impact a student’s progress if at all possible while the grievance process is occurring.
3. The faculty shall meet with the student within two (2) instructional days but no longer than ten (10) instructional days and respond to the student within two (2) instructional days but no longer than ten (10) instructional days unless the student would be irreparably harmed by a delay. If so, the student and the faculty shall consult with the program director/chair for guidance. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, the student shall have two (2) instructional days but no longer than ten (10) instructional days to grieve to the program director/chair.
4. The program director/chair shall meet with the student within two (2) instructional days but no longer than ten (10) instructional days and respond to the student within two (2) instructional days unless the student would be irreparably harmed by a delay. If so, the student and the program director shall consult with the dean for guidance. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, the student shall have two (2) instructional days but no longer than ten (10) instructional days to grieve to the assistant dean. Appointments shall be coordinated through the senior administrative assistant, who will ensure due process has been followed and provide the student with a form to complete in advance of their meeting with the assistant dean.
5. The Assistant Dean shall meet with the student within five (5) instructional days and respond to the student within five (5) instructional days unless the student would be irreparably harmed by a delay. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, the student shall have two (2) instructional days but no longer than ten (10) instructional days to grieve to the Dean. Appointments shall be coordinated through the senior administrative assistant, who will provide the student with a form to complete in advance of their meeting with the Dean.

6. On the day of the scheduled meeting, the student will be asked to report 10-15 minutes prior to the scheduled meeting time and submit their completed form upon check-in. During this time, the dean will review the student's written narrative of the factual events and the requested remedy during the first meeting. The dean shall conduct a complete thorough investigation and respond to the student within five (5) instructional days unless the student would be irreparably harmed by a delay.
7. In the department formal process, the dean's decision is final.
8. In the informal AP 5530 process, if the student is not satisfied with the outcome, the student shall then proceed with the College's formal process found in AP 5530. Students shall be notified at every step in the informal AP 5530 process of the next step and the option to file a formal grievance.
9. The Division and Department due processes do not supersede any process or policy found in other District publications, policies, or procedures. District policies AP 5530 are primacy for all grade grievances. If conflicts occur, the District process shall supersede the Division process.
10. If a student perceives that he/she cannot discuss the matter with either the faculty member chair of director, the student must explain why in the written narrative to the assistant dean or dean.
11. This process is not used for any Title IV, IX, or ADA complaints. Students are recommended to reach out to the assistant dean or dean for guidance in these cases. These shall be fast-tracked, and the assistant dean or dean shall meet with the student within one business day.

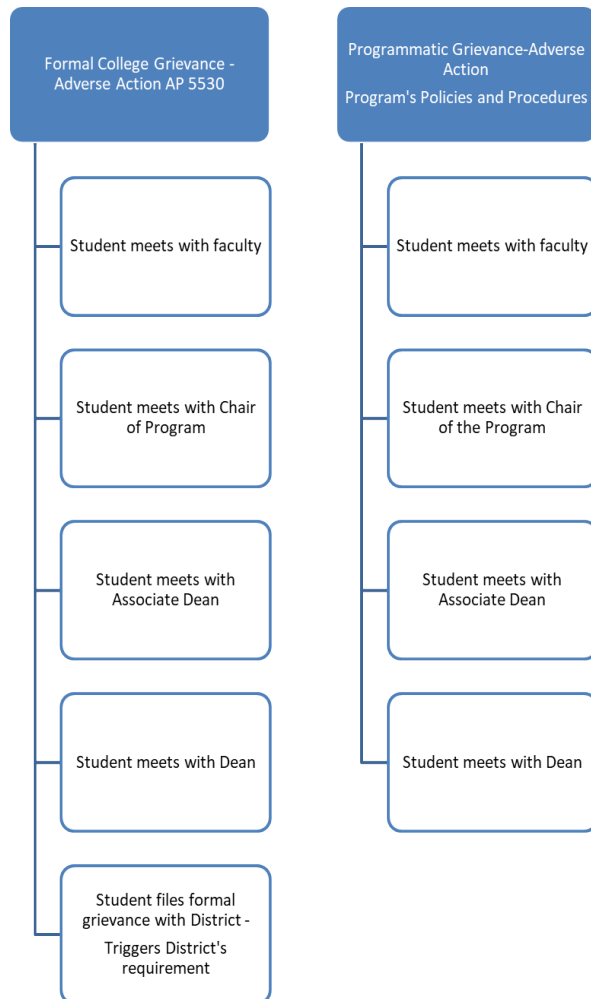
Informal Grievance Process

If a program candidate or someone from the general public wishes to grieve or file a complaint, the following process will apply:

1. If requested, the Assistant Dean shall meet with the individual within five (5) instructional days and respond to the individual within five (5) instructional days unless the delay would cause irreparable harm. The individual must inform the assistant dean of a possible negative effect due to a five-day delay and ask for an expedited review. If additional time is necessary to complete a full investigation, the individual will be informed.
2. Appointments shall be coordinated through the senior admin, who will provide the individual with a form to complete in advance of their meeting with the dean.
3. On the day of the scheduled meeting, the individual complainant/grievant will be asked to report 10-15 minutes prior to the scheduled meeting time and submit their completed form upon check-in. During this time, the Dean will review the written narrative of the factual events and the requested remedy during the first meeting.
4. If the individual is not satisfied with the outcome, the individual shall then proceed to meet with the dean. The dean shall confer with assistant dean prior to the meeting. If the complainant/grievant is not satisfied with the dean's decision, he/she/they shall proceed with the College's formal process depending upon the issue.

5. Alternately, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous, he/she/they may complete the form and email the document to schshs@saddleback.edu or drop it off to the Health Sciences and Human Services office located on the campus.

Figure 1.1 Dual Grievance Processes



Discrimination Complaints

Students who feel that they have been discriminated can direct their complaints to the Title IX Officer, Juan Avalos, Ph.D., Vice President for Student Services, by filling out the [Unlawful Discrimination Complaint Form](#).

IX. Resources

Important College Policies

Please refer to the [Saddleback College Student Handbook](#)

- Grading Policy
- Pass/No Pass (P/NP)
- Course Repetition
- Probation
- Dismissal from College
- Readmission after Dismissal
- Academic Renewal
- Rules and Regulations for Student Behavior
- Standard of Student Conduct
- Removal from Class by Instructor
- Recommended Range of Sanctions and Disciplinary Actions
- Stronger Disciplinary Actions
- Grade Grievance Policy
- Gender Equity Grievance Policy
- Section 504/Americans with Disabilities Act Complaint/Grievance Procedure
- Alcohol and Drug Enforcement Policies and Education
- Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Title IX and Sexual Misconduct Reporting

Student Technical Support

- [Student Technical Support website](#)
- [Chat with Student Technical Support](#)
- [Canvas Basics for Students](#) (Instructional Videos)
- After Hours Support for Canvas: (844) 303-0343

Other Campus Links

- [Saddleback College Student Handbook](#)
- [Veteran Services](#)
- [Career Guidance](#)
- [Disability Services](#)

Information and Reference Numbers

• Campus Police Emergency	(949) 582-4444
• Health Center	(949) 582-4606
• Psychological Services	(949) 582-4606
• Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)	(949) 582-4357
• Vice President for Student Services	(949) 582-4566
• Dean of Counseling	(949) 582-4573
• DSPS	(949) 582-4885
• Veterans Ed. & Transition Services	(949) 582-4252
• Child Abuse Hotline (24 hrs)	(714) 940-1000
• Rape Crisis Hotline (24 hrs)	(949) 831-9110
• Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis OC	(714) 957-2737 / (949) 831-9110
• National Sexual Abuse Hotline	(800) 656-4673
• Suicide Prevention Hotline	(800) 784-2433 / (310) 391-1253
• Suicide Crisis Hotline	(714) 894-4242
• Domestic Violence Hotline	(800) 799-7233 / (714) 992-1931
• HOPE Hotline	(714) 639-4673
• Human Options: Battered Women	(949) 854-3554
• Interval House	(714) 891-8121
• Laura's House	(949) 361-3775
• LGBTQ Hotline	(888) 843-4564

Community Resources

- California Department of Public Health, Sexual Violence Prevention
- Center for Disease Control, Sexual Violence
- National Institute of Justice, Rape and Sexual Violence
- Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Sexual Assault
- Orange County 211

Important Professional Links

[American Health Information Management Association](#)
[AHIMA Career Map](#)
[Health Information and Management Systems Society](#)
[California Health Information Association](#)
[American Academy of Professional Coders](#)
[American Medical Association](#)
[myAHIMA](#)

APPENDIX

1. HIT AS Degree Roadmap
2. HIT Program Communication Channels



2021 HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AS DEGREE

Roadmap

Effective: Fall 2021

Semester I - Fall		
Course	Title	Units
HSC 104	Medical Terminology	3
ENG 1A or 1AH	Principles of Composition I or Honors Principles of Composition I (Fulfills GE Area 1A)	4
AS Degree GE Requirement	Area 5: Select from Lifelong Understanding and Self Development	3
AS Degree GE Requirement	Area 3: Select from Social and Behavioral Sciences	3
Semester II - Spring		
HSC 107 or BIO 113	Human Body Fundamentals or Human Anatomy and Physiology	3 or 4
MATH 10* or PSYC 44*	Introduction to Statistics or Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (Fulfills GE Area 1C)	3
CIM 1 or CIM 10	Computer Information Systems or Introduction to Information Systems	3 or 4
AS Degree Requirement	Area 1B: Select from Communication and Analytical Thinking	3
Semester III - Summer		
AS Degree GE Requirement	Area 6: Select from Cultures in the United States Requirement	3
Semester IV - Fall (Start of HIT Program)		
HIT 100*	Health Information Science	2
HSC 106*	Legal and Ethical Aspects of Health Information	3
HIT 101*	Alternative Healthcare Delivery Systems	2
CIMW 105	Web Development and DB Intro SQL and MYSQL	3
AS Degree GE Requirement	Area 2: Select from Natural Sciences (only needed if BIO 113 is not taken)	3
Semester V - Spring		
HIT 111*	Health Information Technologies (HCIT)	3
HSC 108*	Disease Processes for the Health Sciences	3
HIT 109*	ICD Diagnostic Coding	3
HIT 110*	ICD Procedure Coding	2
AS Degree GE Requirement	Area 4: Select from Arts and Humanities	3,4 or 5
Semester VI - Fall		
CIMA 288	Database Reporting	3.5
HIT 119*	Management of Resources in Healthcare	3
HIT 116*	Performance Improvement in Healthcare	3
HIT 115*	CPT and Ambulatory Care Coding	3
Semester VII - Spring		
HIT 122*	Reimbursement Methodologies	3
HIT 130*	Directed Practice	4
	(Requires completion of HIT 101, HIT 109, HIT 110, HIT 111, HIT 115, HIT 116, HIT 119, CIMW 105, CIMA 288, HSC 106, HSC 108, CIM 1 or CIM 10)	
		Major Units 52.5-54.5
		Total Degree Units including GE 79.5-93.5
Meet with a counselor to review and incorporate GE courses that best meets your goals. The Associate of Science (A.S.) Degree in Health Information Technology requires students to complete both HIT department and GE requirements. A previous Associate Degree, Bachelor's Degree or higher degree does not automatically meet GE requirements. All outside transcripts must be evaluated toward Saddleback College's requirements. Students have 3 options for completing GE requirements: Saddleback College GE, CSU GE or IGETC.		

*Indicates courses have a prerequisite or recommended preparation. Please see course requirements.

Saddleback College/HIT Program Communication Channels

