

Biomedical Informatics Technician(BIT)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What does a BIT do?

A: Biomedical Informatics Technicians (sometimes referred to as health information management or technology professionals) utilize technology to help manage health information. In particular, they enter, maintain and report information using electronic health records. In addition, they code clinical data for the purposes of reimbursement. The BIT program has a strong focus on the collection and use of electronic health data for quality assurance and improvement.

Q: Is there a certification required to be a BIT?

A: Many employers require employees working within the health information arena to achieve and maintain a credential from AHIMA, the American Health Information Management Association. Graduates of the BIT program are eligible to take the RHIT (Registered Health Information Technician) certification exam. More information is available in the MSTC catalog or from the program director.

Q: What if I already have a certificate, diploma or degree?

A: Students who have already completed college level work may be eligible to transfer credits in for use in this program. Most commonly, students transfer in courses such as medical terminology, anatomy and physiology and some general education courses. If you already have an associate's degree or higher, you may be eligible to transfer in all your general education courses. Please note that some general education courses may still be required as they are program specific. Students who have completed one of the BIT certificates offered at MSTC can use those courses to meet the requirements of the associate degree.

Q: Why are there two steps to the admission process?

A: There are two steps in the admissions process for BIT because we would like to allow students to begin taking some of their general courses as soon as possible. By completing step one of the admissions process and becoming conditionally accepted to the program, students may begin taking some of the general education courses as well as some of the first semester program courses that do not have pre-requisites (i.e. medical terminology). After being conditionally accepted (by completing Step 1), students may also be eligible for financial aid.

Q: What is the Intent to Enroll form?

A: The final requirement of the Step 2 admissions process is to complete the Intent to Enroll form. This lets the College know that you have completed all the Step 2 requirements and are ready to start your core program classes (those numbered 10-530-1xx). Be sure to attach any documents required as evidence of completing the Step 2 requirements with your form. Please note that some programs do not have spots immediately available in core classes.

Q: Is there a waiting list for BIT?

A: As of April 2011, there are immediate openings next semester for students interested in the BIT program.

Q: Can this program be completed entirely online?

A: Most of this program can be completed entirely online, however the clinical experience requires you to work within a healthcare organization. In addition, the Electronic Medical Records course has some required face to face meetings. Students who are enrolling in the program from a distance should speak with the program director about alternatives for these face to face meetings.

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Q: Where do BIT students complete their clinical experience?

A: Most students complete their clinical experience in the medical records department of a hospital or clinic, however many different clinical experiences are available including long term care and specialty clinics. Students are given an opportunity to list their clinical preferences from those available and every attempt is made to make the assignment a reasonable distance from the student's home. Some students opt to complete part of the clinical experience "virtually" by utilizing the Virtual Lab software used in other BIT offerings.

Q: Do I need to attend Smart Start (college orientation)?

A: Students are **highly encouraged** to attend MSTC's college orientation program known as Smart Start. Students learn how to use the college's technology including their student account (MyMSTC). Participants also learn how to register for classes and about many of the services available to students. Sometimes students receive a second invitation to participate in Smart Start when they complete their Intent to Enroll form and are officially accepted to their program. It is only necessary to participate in Smart Start one time.

Q: Do I need to attend Program Orientation?

A: Program orientation for BIT is completed by students online and is **required**. Approximately two to three months before you begin taking "core" program classes you will receive information on how to complete the online orientation. The program orientation provides another overview of the program and its curriculum. It also helps to ensure you understand the policies and procedures of the program.

Q: What is clinical health work?

A: Students enrolling in health programs that require clinical experiences must document some information about their health including their record of immunizations for certain communicable diseases. This information is required by our clinical affiliates (sites where you will complete your clinical). Several months prior to clinical, students participate in an online health work orientation that provides details on the information you will need to provide. If you would like to get started early on this process, you can begin to gather documentation of immunizations you received as a child starting at age 1.

Q: Is it true that health work can be expensive?

A: Documenting your immunization history is usually free as long as you know where you received your immunizations. Some students may have had their immunizations tracked within RECIN (Regional Early Childhood Immunization Network) that was implemented in central and northern Wisconsin in 1994. If you know you will be unable to provide documentation for immunizations, please be aware that you will need to have lab work (called titers) drawn to measure whether or not you are immune to the diseases. Titers are usually the most expensive part of the health work process so you are encouraged to locate the documents for your immunizations if at all possible. Unfortunately, health care agencies are unable to accept a history of the disease (i.e. having had the chicken pox at age 5) as evidence of immunity so a titer must be drawn for individuals who were not immunized due to a history of the disease. Although sometimes costly, health work is done to help ensure your safety and the safety of your patients. These documents will also be needed when you begin your career as a health profession so it is an investment in your future. Specific health work requirements will be presented to you the semester before you enroll in clinical.