

# MONTANA BOARD OF REGENTS

## LEVEL II REQUEST FORM

Item No.:	136-2853-R0907	Date of Meeting:	September 19-21, 2007
Institution:	Montana State University-Great Falls College of Technology		
Program Title:	Associate of Applied Science in Medical Billing and Coding		

Level II proposals require approval by the Board of Regents.

**Level II action requested (check all that apply):** Level II proposals entail substantive additions to, alterations in, or termination of programs, structures, or administrative or academic entities typically characterized by the (a) addition, reassignment, or elimination of personnel, facilities, or courses of instruction; (b) rearrangement of budgets, cost centers, funding sources; and (c) changes which by implication could impact other campuses within the Montana University System and community colleges. Board policy 303.1 indicates the curricular proposals in this category:

- 1. Change names of degrees (e.g. from B.A. to B.F.A.)
- 2. Implement a new minor or certificate where there is no major or no option in a major;
- 3. Establish new degrees and add majors to existing degrees;
- 4. Expand/extend approved mission; and
- 5. Any other changes in governance and organization as described in Board of Regents' Policy 218, such as formation, elimination or consolidation of a college, division, school, department, institute, bureau, center, station, laboratory, or similar unit.

### **Specify Request:**

Montana State University-Great Falls College of Technology seeks approval from the Montana Board of Regents to offer an Associate of Applied Science degree program in Medical Billing and Coding.

## **MEDICAL BILLING AND CODING MSU-GREAT FALLS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY**

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### Curriculum Proposal

#### **1. Overview**

Montana State University-Great Falls College of Technology (herein after “the College”) is requesting approval by the Montana Board of Regents to offer an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Medical Billing & Coding.

The College has historically had two Certificate programs, one in Medical Billing and one in Health Information Coding. It has been typical for most students pursuing one of these, to also pursue the other, thus graduating with two Certificates of Applied Science (CAS) credentials. However, as stand-alone programs, the Medical Billing program does not qualify for financial aid because as an online program it fails to meet the US Department of Education's minimum number of contact hours and does not completely matriculate into an Associate degree program at the College. Until recent curricular changes in the Health Information Technology Associate of Applied Science (AAS) program, the Health Information Coding program did not qualify either. Recognizing both of these issues, one that students typically take both programs, and two, without an AAS degree to matriculate the entire program into for financial aid eligibility, the College sees the addition of a combined program culminating in an AAS as an excellent solution and even better option for a higher level credential for students.

#### **2. Need**

##### *a. To what specific need is the institution responding in developing the proposed program?*

The demand for individuals in the Medical Processing fields has been substantiated through assessment of the current CAS programs, so while this proposal will continue to respond to that need, the primary purpose of the proposed program is to respond to student need as mentioned above. Over 80% of the students at the College utilize some form of financial aid, and this proposal will ensure that each of the College's CAS programs within the proposed AAS will be financial aid eligible. In addition, since the majority of the current certificate-seeking students pursue both certificates, and graduates are employed in occupations requiring them to utilize both skill-sets, having their education culminate in an AAS degree will be beneficial to their professional futures.

##### *b. How will students and any other affected constituencies be served by the proposed program?*

Students will be positively impacted with the proposed program for many reasons. Primarily, those who choose to pursue just the Medical Billing CAS program would now be eligible for financial aid, and those students who are pursuing both programs can now combine that coursework and earn a higher credential in an AAS Degree. In addition, the College will now be better able to track students in each program, as those seeking the Medical Billing program, but selecting the Coding program to get financial aid, will be properly aligned with their intended educational outcome.

##### *c. What is the anticipated demand for the program? How was this determined?*

Demand is estimated primarily from the current CAS program enrollments which are estimated at 27 students in the Health Information Coding CAS and 12 students in the Medical Billing CAS for fall 2008. Therefore, it is estimated that those two numbers will level out (see reference to students pursuing both CAS but claiming the Coding program to receive financial aid) and approximately 10 to 15 current and new students will enroll in the proposed program.

**3. Institutional and System Fit**

- a. *What is the connection between the proposed program and existing programs at the institution?*

The College currently provides a variety of health information processing programs such as the two CAS programs mentioned above, as well as an AAS in Health Information Technology and an AAS in Medical Transcription. The combination of 2 one-year CAS programs into a viable and desirable AAS program is clearly in line with the College's mission and focus in this programmatic area. It is a natural expansion of the institution's offerings.

- b. *Will approval of the proposed program require changes to any existing programs at the institution? If so, please describe.*

No. The College currently offers all of the coursework of the proposed program within two existing CAS programs, one in Medical Billing and one in Health Information Coding.

- c. *Describe what differentiates this program from other, closely related programs at the institution (if appropriate).*

This program is essentially a combination of two existing CAS programs, currently offered by the College, into one AAS degree program. It is the combined knowledge base that essentially differentiates it from the standalone CAS programs. The other most closely related program, the AAS in Health Information Technology, has a curriculum that covers some common coursework as the proposed program, but has discrete coursework focused more on data health information data management, whereas the proposed program focuses more on information processing.

- d. *How does the proposed program serve to advance the strategic goals of the institution?*

In alignment with the strategic plan of the Montana Board of Regents, the College is committed to increasing participation of students in post-secondary education, specifically two-year programming, as well as increasing the number of students earning a credential. In addition, at the core of the College's Mission is preparing people for and placing them into technically-rich, high-demand jobs. The proposed program provides another credentialing option that individuals seeking employment in the health care field can pursue, and more significantly, as a completely online program, it opens doors for place-bound or working individuals to participate in post-secondary education.

- e. *Describe the relationship between the proposed program and any similar programs within the Montana University System. In cases of substantial duplication, explain the need for the proposed program at an additional institution. Describe any efforts that were made to collaborate with these similar programs; and if no efforts were made, explain why. If articulation or transfer agreements have been developed for the substantially duplicated programs, please include the agreement(s) as part of the documentation.*

Currently there are no other AAS in Medical Billing and Coding programs in the Montana University System. Similar programs to the College's CAS programs in Billing and Coding do exist, and in fact, the program at The University of Montana-Missoula College of Technology (UM-Missoula COT) already partners with the College to allow their students seeking an AAS in Health Information Coding to take the College's courses to satisfy a portion of the student's degree program requirements at UM-Missoula COT. Partnership amongst MUS institutions and the College is certainly encouraged and anticipated with the 100% online nature of the program; however, for this proposal, because all of the coursework in the proposed program is currently being offered by the College, no further collaborative efforts were made with other MUS institutions.

#### 4. Program Details

- a. Provide a detailed description of the proposed curriculum. Where possible, present the information in the form intended to appear in the catalog or other publications. NOTE: In the case of two-year degree programs and certificates of applied science, the curriculum should include enough detail to determine if the characteristics set out in Regents' Policy 301.12 have been met.

**Medical Billing & Coding Specialist  
Associate of Applied Science**

**Fall Semester**

<b>Course No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
AH 101	Healthcare Delivery	3
AH 185	Basic Medical Terminology	3
BIO 127	A&P I for Nonclinical Majors	4
MATH 103	Introductory Algebra or higher	4
		Subtotal 14

**Spring Semester**

<b>Course No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
AH 194	Basic Pharmaceuticals	1
AH 201	Medical Science	3
BIO 128	A&P II for Nonclinical Majors	4
HI 236	ICD Coding	3
HI 237	CPT Coding	3
		Subtotal 14

**Summer Semester**

<b>Course No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
HI 256	Intermediate ICD	3
HI 257	Intermediate CPT	3
		Subtotal 6

**Fall Semester**

<b>Course No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PSY 101	General Psychology <b>OR</b>	3
SOC 111	Introduction to Sociology	
HI 132	Health Data Content	3
OO 111	Fundamentals of Insurance	4
HI 295	Overview of Health Informatics	4
		Subtotal 14

**Spring Semester**

<b>Course No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
HI 156	Legal & Regulatory	3
OO 112	Advanced Insurance	3
ENG 124	Business & Professional Comm.	3
OO 290	Billing/Coding PPE	2
OO 291	Billing/Coding Capstone	2
		Subtotal 13

**Total Program Credits – 61~**

+ A grade of "C" or above required for graduation | \* Indicates prerequisites needed

| \*\* Placement in course(s) is determined by admissions assessment

-Many students need preliminary Math, English, and/or Computer courses before enrolling in the program required courses. These courses may increase the total number of program credits. Students should review their Math and English placement scores as well as high school transcripts with an advisor before planning out their full program schedule.

- b. Describe the planned implementation of the proposed program, including estimates of numbers of students at each stage.*

The coursework within the proposed program is currently be offered by the College. It is anticipated that many students currently seeking the two CAS credentials currently offered will seek the AAS degree presented here. Initially, in Academic Year 2008 the College expects the program to attract a minimum of 10 students and hopes to see that number grow to 20 students over the course of the program.

## **5. Resources**

- a. Will additional faculty resources be required to implement this program? If yes, please describe the need and indicate the plan for meeting this need.*

No new faculty will be required to implement this program.

- b. Are other, additional resources required to ensure the success of the proposed program? If yes, please describe the need and indicate the plan for meeting this need.*

No additional resources are required. As mentioned previously, this program is combining the curricula of two existing CAS programs, one in Medical Billing and one in Health Information Coding, into one AAS degree program.

## **6. Assessment.**

The proposed program will be assessed using the College's institutional outcomes assessment practices. These include assessing standard performance metrics such as graduation/completion rates, student retention, and enrollments. Additionally, the program will undergo an internal program review as required by Board of Regent Policy and standard College practice. In addition, the program's student learning outcomes will be assessed to evaluate student success in obtaining the skills identified as goals of the program. Finally, additional measures will be used to determine program success including assessing the number of students who successfully pass professional certification/licensure exams, how many students who complete one of the CAS programs within the proposed program come back to complete this AAS degree, and qualitative measures such as student and employer satisfaction.

## **7. Process Leading to Submission**

The Health Information Technology and Health Information Coding programs at the College are accredited by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA); therefore, an extensive review of AHIMA's curriculum recommendations was conducted prior to initiating this proposal. The program directors of both CAS programs worked collaboratively to develop the proposed program's curriculum. The Health Information Technology Program Advisory Board and the College's Curriculum Committee made the final institutional approval of the proposed program.