cchim
CANADIAN COLLEGE OF HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

EXAMINATION GUIDE

Guidelines for Challenging the

Canadian College of Health Information Management

Classification and Coding Certification Examination

2019

PLEASE READ THIS GUIDE IN FULL BEFORE

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ADDRESS

Questions related to the examination application should be directed to CHIMA. For contact information, please visit:
https://www.echima.ca/chima/contact

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ABOUT CHIMA/CCHIM

Information about CHIMA and CCHIM including Mission, Vision, Values, and 2018-2021 Strategic Plan can be found on the website at: https://www.echima.ca/chima/about

CODE OF ETHICS
The Code of Ethics and the Interpretation Guidelines to support the Code of Ethics may be found on the website at: https://www.echima.ca/him/ethics

BECOMING CERTIFIED
Information on the CCCS credential, professional title, and eligibility criteria to challenge the Classification and Coding Certification Examination may be found here: https://www.echima.ca/CCHIM/classification-coding-certification. The objective of the certification examination is to assess the proficiency and accuracy of classification and coding of complex cases beyond the entry-to-practice level for ICD-10-CA and CCI classifications in acute care settings. More information on HIM job roles and their descriptions can be found online on the Career Matrix: https://www.echima.ca/public/CareerMatrix/index.html.

EXAMINATION DATES
The Classification and Coding Certification Examination dates for the year can be found at: https://www.echima.ca/CCHIM/classification-coding-certification

CONFIDENTIALITY OF EXAMINATION PROCESS
Individuals who apply to challenge a CCHIM certification examination enter into a confidential relationship with CCHIM. To ensure confidentiality, all applicant inquiries about the process before, during, and after the examination will be dealt with directly between the applicant concerned and the CCHIM Registrar or designate.

SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY
Special needs, as defined for CCHIM policy, refers to an applicant or candidate with any documented temporary or permanent physical impairment or any persistent mental, psychological, sensory, or learning impairment. For testing purposes, these individuals are considered to be disadvantaged in relation to other candidates because of:

- o Visual disability;
- o Hearing impairment;
- o Motor disability;
- o Learning disability;
- o Limited physical tolerance; or
- o Other disabling circumstances

Applicants with special needs who would like their special needs taken into consideration when challenging the Classification and Coding Certification Examination must fill in the appropriate section of the application form. All formal documentation of an examination applicant's disability must be received in writing. This documentation must include a final report from an educational psychologist, physician, or equivalent professional detailing the diagnosed disability, recommendations, and required examination accommodations.

Please send formal documentation to the CCHIM London office. The mailing address is located on the Contact Us page at: https://www.echima.ca/chima/contact

EXAMINATION APPLICATION

All examination candidates must complete the online examination application by logging in to the 'Members Only' section of the CHIMA website https://www.echima.ca/login and following the link to the Classification and Coding Certification Examination application.

EXPLANATION OF EACH SECTION OF THE APPLICATION FORM

Section 1. Identification

All information in this section will auto-populate based on the current information in the applicant's online CHIMA membership profile. Applicants are responsible for reviewing all information to ensure it is correct in both the application and the CHIMA membership profile.

Name: This information is used to prepare certificates for successful candidates. Please include a middle name or initial on the application form if it is to be included on the certificate.

Address: Applicants are responsible for ensuring a current address is included in the application and is updated in the online membership profile.

Email address: An applicant must provide a primary email address. Please ensure it is correct, as correspondence following receipt of a candidate's examination application — including the provision of an examination password — will be carried out via email once the application is approved. If a current email address is not provided, the applicant will not receive any follow-up information.

Section 2. CCHIM Certification Examination Application

Name of the school offering the CCHIM-approved preparatory program and year of graduation: This section is only applicable to those who graduated from a CCHIM-approved preparatory program. Please complete all details, including the school name and year of graduation.

Required documentation:

Graduates from CCHIM-approved preparatory programs: Applicants are responsible for arranging the final transcript from a CCHIM-approved preparatory course (i.e. Coding Specialist Program through CHA Learning) to be sent directly to CCHIM (mailing address can be located on our Contact Us page by visiting: https://www.echima.ca/chima/contact). Transcripts must state the applicant has graduated from the course.

Important: Ensure this is a **certified, original,** and **final** transcript. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure all documentation is received by CCHIM no later than the deadline dates provided. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the CCHIM-approved preparatory program is aware of submission deadlines. If CCHIM does not receive a final transcript, the applicant will be ineligible to challenge the examination.

Experience eligibility pathway: Applicants must submit a current resume and a reference letter from a current employer that outlines current work experience in the classification and coding field. If CCHIM does not receive a resume and reference letter, the applicant will be ineligible to challenge the examination. Please submit the resume and reference letter to exam@echima.ca.

> **Please note:**
>
> - 'Certified' means bearing the signature of the school's Registrar and the school's seal.
> - Photocopies of transcripts will <u>not</u> be accepted.
> - Original transcripts become the property of CCHIM and will not be returned to the examination candidate, as they are kept as part of the candidate's your permanent file.
> - Final transcripts must be requested through the school of graduation. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the CCHIM receives a final transcript, which is confirmation the applicant graduated from a preparatory program.

Examination Fee

The examination fee is $349.00 (plus applicable tax). This fee includes a copy of the CCHIM Classification and Coding Examination Primer, which can be downloaded directly from the exam application page in the 'Members Only' area on the CHIMA website. A receipt will be emailed to the email address provided on the application form.

Declaration

Read the statements as presented in the online application. Agree to the statements by checking the agreement box on the application. Checking this box confirms the applicant agrees:

- The information contained on the form is accurate;

- To abide by all examination policies and rules and the CHIMA Code of Ethics during the entire examination process; and

- That the information provided can be released to Captus Press, the online examination company contracted by CHIMA. Captus Press will use the information provided for the express purpose of examination administration only. Captus Press will not contact the applicant. The applicant's information will not be sold, shared, or released to any third parties.

All points in the declaration section **<u>must</u>** be checked by the applicant before the application can be processed.

DECLARATION AGREEMENT

☐   I confirm that the information provided on this application is accurate and complete.

☐   I have read and fully understand the content of the applicable CHIMA Examination Guide including all information on cheating and will abide by all policies, timeframes, and protocols

☐   I understand that the content of the examination is confidential and any breach of the Rules and Regulations of the examination, as detailed in the applicable Examination Guide, may result in disqualification from writing or automatic failure of the examination.

☐   I understand and agree to the release of my examination result via email (to the email address provided on this document or to an email address that I update post-submission).

☐   I have reviewed and agree to abide by the CHIMA Code of Ethics. (See section 2 of the applicable Examination Guide).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT/CONFIRMATION

A confirmation email will be sent to the applicant once the application has been received and payment has been processed. CCHIM will notify the applicant if there are any issues with the application during the approval process.

**Please check the bulk or junk email folder prior to contacting CHIMA, as the email may end up there.

APPROVAL OF EXAMINATION APPLICATION

The Classification and Coding examination application will be approved when <u>all</u> of the following have occurred:

- CCHIM receives a complete application by the due date
- Canadidate pays all appropriate fees
- Canadidate meets all eligibility criteria (https://www.echima.ca/CCHIM/classification-coding-certification)
- CCHIM receives all required documentation by the due date

Applicants will receive notification requesting additional information if components of the application are incomplete. This additional information must be submitted by the stated due date for the examination application to be processed.

APPROVAL EMAIL

Each approved applicant will receive an email from CCHIM containing the candidate passcode and information on how to book the examination time/sitting with Examity® during the selected examination week. Please read these instructions carefully, as they are time sensitive.

**Please check the bulk or junk email folder prior to contacting CHIMA, as the email may end up there.

WITHDRAWAL FROM OR RESCHEDULING THE EXAMINATION

Please find the deadlines for withdrawal from the CCCS certification examination at the following link: https://www.echima.ca/CCHIM/classification-coding-certification

Applicants who choose to **withdraw** from the examination, based on the deadlines noted at the above link, will receive a 50% refund of the examination fee upon receipt of a written request for refund to CCHIM.

Applicants may **reschedule** the exam date or time within the approved scheduled examination seating (e.g. January 21-25, 2019) through the applicant's Examity® student profile. Please be aware that Examity® charges a nominal fee for rescheduling.

If notice is received later than the dates outlined at the above link, no refund will be provided.

CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION POLICIES, RULES, AND REGULATIONS

Any breach of the following policies, rules, and regulations constitutes a breach in the Code of Ethics and could result in disqualification from writing, automatic failure of the examination, or a professional conduct inquiry. All candidates and other persons associated with the CCHIM certification examinations will comply with the policies and procedures, rules and regulations, and professional Code of Ethics in the period leading up to, during, and following the CCHIM national examinations.

Details regarding CCHIM policies, rules, and regulations may be found here:
https://www.echima.ca/uploaded/CCHIM%20Online%20Proctoring%20Guide_FINAL.pdf

CANCELLATION OF THE EXAMINATION

In the event of any weather or other occurrence beyond the control of CCHIM, the examination may, at the sole discretion of CCHIM, be cancelled, postponed, or administered on an alternate date. Every effort will be made to notify candidates by telephone or email of a cancellation or change of date. All efforts will be made to hold the examination as scheduled. Only CCHIM can cancel the administration of the examination.

EXAMINATION CONTENT

The examination questions are developed by industry experts and replicate complex scenarios and situations found in acute care settings. The examination evaluates six (6) competency areas. The additional section consists of case scenarios that fall under one or more of the six competencies. See below for the list of competencies, with the content weight of each domain:

1. Classification and Coding: Fundamentals (11.7%)

2. Classification and Coding: General Medicine (13.3%)

3. Classification and Coding: Neoplasms (15%)

4. Classification and Coding: Interventions (15%)

5. Classification and Coding: Obstetrics and Newborns (15%)

6. Classification and Coding: Iatrogenic Disorders, Trauma, and Other Related Conditions and Disorders (15%)

7. Classification and Coding: Case Scenarios (15%)

The CCCS examination consists of a total of 60 multiple choice questions (51 multiple choice questions and 3 case scenarios accompanied by 3 multiple choice questions each). Candidates are allotted 2 hours and 12 minutes (132 minutes) to complete the examination.

Once a page has been submitted, candidates CANNOT go back to review or change answers. A page may be reviewed as many times as needed prior to submission.

Please refer to the Classification and Coding Certification Examination Primer for additional information about the content of the examination.

EXAMINATION PROCEDURE

Details regarding computer requirements, online proctoring and room requirements may be found here: https://www.echima.ca/uploaded/CCHIM%20Online%20Proctoring%20Guide_FINAL.pdf

Special Notification Regarding Classification And Coding Online Examination:

Examination Computer Requirements

Examination candidates are responsible for purchasing or arranging access to the following resources, which must be preinstalled on the computer prior to the examination date:

      a.   Canadian Coding Standards (v. 2018); **and**

      b.   ICD-10-CA/CCI Folio (v. 2018) software

IMPORTANT: Examination candidates are responsible for purchasing or arranging access to ICD-10-CA/CCI Folio software. The Folio software and Canadian Coding Standards must be preinstalled on the computer being used to access the examination. Do not wait until the day of the examination to install software on the computer. Examination candidates must not access any other websites or documents during the entire examination.

Important: Please make sure to open the Folio software and the Canadian Coding Standards document prior to the examination start time.

Submitting Answers

The examination is set up with each screen page being a 'mini-exam.' When the examination candidate is ready to submit a completed page, **the check box must be selected FIRST before hitting the 'submit answers' button**.

If the check box is not selected prior to selecting 'submit answers,' the candidate may be bumped off of this page. If this occurs, select the back button to restore the page. If the page is not restored, the online proctor must contact Captus Press to confirm whether or not the page was submitted properly. If the page was not submitted correctly, the candidate will have to complete the questions again.

MARKING THE EXAMINATION

All multiple-choice questions are computer graded. Each correct multiple-choice question is worth one mark. Each of the scenario questions have three (3) multiple choice questions assigned to them and are therefore worth a total of three (3) marks — one mark per multiple-choice question. The examination score will be the total of correct answers. Candidates do not lose marks for wrong answers.

VALIDATION OF SCORES

CCHIM is responsible for the validity and integrity of the reported scores. On occasion, occurrences such as computer malfunction or misconduct by a candidate may cause a score to be suspect. CCHIM reserves the right to void or withhold examination results if, upon investigation, violation of CCHIM's regulations is suspected. Candidates are expected to fully cooperate with the investigation.

PASS REQUIREMENT FOR CCHIM EXAMINATION

The objective of the CCCS certification examination is to evaluate the accuracy and efficiency of classification and coding of complex cases for certification with the CCHIM. Final results are calculated as a percent (%) of the marks achieved by a candidate in all examination domains in order to determine each candidate's certification status. The pass requirement is a minimum of 70% in each domain **and** an overall result of not less than 80%.

Candidates who achieve this examination outcome are 'certified.' Candidates who do not achieve this examination outcome are 'not certified.'

NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

The CCCS certification examination results are reported as 'certified' or 'not certified,' and marks or percentages will be provided. Candidates will be notified in writing of their official certification status approximately four (4) weeks after the examination; however, please allow an additional two (2) to three (3) weeks due to potential mail delays. An email with 'certified' or 'not certified' is sent out within 14 business days following the examination but does not include the breakdown of marks.

Successful candidates will receive a CCHIM certificate, in addition to a letter including the breakdown of marks. Names of successful candidates are entered in the CCHIM register.

All candidates will be notified of their marks for the specific content sections on the examination. Unsuccessful candidates should review the areas where they demonstrated particular weaknesses (i.e. received less than 70%).

INFORMATION SHARING

Personal information and individual exam results are **not** shared with CCHIM CCCS-approved preparatory programs.

To support quality improvement opportunities at the program level, and only when sample size is appropriate, aggregate pass/fail rates are shared with the CCHIM CCCS-approved preparatory program from which the examination candidate graduated.

APPEAL PROCEDURE

An appeal to re-mark the Classification and Coding Certification Examination may be considered in keeping with the following:

1. If a candidate fails to achieve certification and wishes to challenge this result, a letter of appeal must be filed with the Registrar of the CCHIM within 30 days of the mailing of the official result.

2. The appeal processing fee of $200.00 (plus applicable taxes) must accompany the letter of appeal in the form of a cheque or money order.

3. The candidate's examination will be re-marked within two (2) weeks of receipt of the appeal.

4. The results will be communicated to the candidate within one (1) month of receipt of the appeal.

5. If the original outcome is reaffirmed, options for a rewrite will be relayed to the candidate.

6. If a new outcome indicating certification status is proven, the candidate will be notified and reimbursed the appeal processing fee.

RE-EXAMINATION

A candidate who is unsuccessful on the first examination attempt may rewrite the examination once more (for a total of two (2) writes), provided all conditions of the CCHIM policy for rewriting are fulfilled. The candidate must complete the entire examination each time. If an examination candidate is not successful on his or her second attempt, the individual is ineligible to rewrite the examination until the candidate provides evidence of additional education and experience based on recommendations from CCHIM.

Questions related to exam administration, appeals process, or general inquiries should be directed to CHIMA. For contact information, please visit: https://www.echima.ca/chima/contact

STUDYING FOR AN EXAMINATION

Examinations can be a stressful experience, and preparation can help minimize stress by reaffirming the knowledge that a candidate has, while assisting in the identification of areas that may require additional review. It is best to study one subject area/topic at a time. Dedicate time (ideally a significant period, such as a few hours over several days) to that subject and spend the time focused. Do not try to review multiple/different subjects in a shorter period. Take frequent short breaks to provide both mental and physical separation from the topic and workspace, allowing for the opportunity to 'recharge.'

Study well in advance of the examination. Do not wait until the week or night before the examination.

STUDY RESOURCES

Classification and Coding Certification Examination Primer
The Classification and Coding Certification Exam Primer is a valuable tool to assist any individual preparing to challenge the Classification and Coding certification examination. Based on the classification and coding domains and subdomains, it identifies each learning outcome with a few examples of the knowledge content. It also provides some practice questions and helpful tips for preparing for the exam.

Other Study Resources:
- **ICD-10-CA/CCI Classification Primer:** The ICD-10-CA/CCI Classification Primer by Joy Fletcher has practice questions with an answer key. Coding rules are highlighted throughout the chapters.
- **Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI):** CIHI offers informational and educational resources on their website to assist coders. Please follow the link for a current list of sessions: https://www.cihi.ca/en/codes-and-classifications

TIPS ON ANSWERING MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Multiple-choice examinations often challenge candidates to make the distinction between plausible answers and the best or most appropriate statements. Many of the questions will not simply be recognition or definition questions, but

will instead require analysis or application of the information learned during the candidate's course of study or preparation in order to choose the best answer.

Set-Up of a Multiple-Choice Question		
Part	**Definition**	**Example**
Stem	Asks a question, poses a problem, or presents an incomplete sentence.	Team building and working in teams can provide the manager of the health information management department with a tool that provides high performance and increased employee morale and personal empowerment, while still meeting the goals of the organization. A functioning team exhibits various characteristics, including:
Distracter	Three plausible options, yet not the most correct or most appropriate responses or completions.	a. Exclusive cliques that provide for individual growth and development b. Minimal communication between the members of the group c. Minimal support provided by management
Key	The best or most appropriate of the available options.	d. Ownership of team decisions by members

How to Approach a Multiple-Choice Question

- **Read the Stem CAREFULLY.**

- Break it down into grammatical parts, retrieving the subject and verb, and then the modifiers to the subject and verb. Eliminate all extraneous information, which is meant to be distracting.

    ° *"A functioning team… characteristics include…"*

- Make sure you understand what kind of information the question is asking for.

    ° *"What factor determines whether a team works effectively"*

- Anticipate the answer before reading the alternatives.

    ° *"Opportunity for discussion, support from management and team members, value of each member is recognized, the team work is greater than that of each individual, a goal that everyone agrees on, two-way communication, openness…"*

- Read each distracter with the stem. Some alternatives may be partly correct or correct statements in themselves, but not when joined to the stem.

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- ° *A functioning team exhibits various characteristics, including minimal communication between the members of the group.*

- ° *A functioning team exhibits various characteristics, including minimal support provided by management.*

- If the answer is obvious right away, mark the correct answer but still **read all the variables/distracters**.

- ° *If another distracter reads correctly, this should be a warning to go back and review your first impression of the correct answer. Have you made a mistake in reading the stem or in your interpretation of one or more of the distracters?*

- Watch for "all of the above" or "none of the above" distracters. Review each distracter to ensure that all (or none) of them will apply.

- Be careful of the negatives in the stem, such as "none," "not," "never," "neither," and "except."

- If the correct answer is unclear, mark the question and move on. Plan to go back to the question at the end of the section. REMEMBER: Once a page is submitted, the page CANNOT be reviewed again. The candidate may review each page **only** prior to submission.

- ° *Another question further along may refresh your memory or may clarify the correct answer.*

- ° *You might be able to answer the question by the process of elimination. Begin by crossing out any answers you know are wrong.*

- ° *Even if you can't eliminate any of the distracters, you still have a 1 in 4 chance of guessing correctly. You will not be penalized for guessing.*

- The answer is not always "C."

Preparing to write a multiple-choice examination should be part of the examination candidate's pre-examination studying.

CANADIAN COLLEGE OF HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

CCHIM wishes you the very best in challenging the

Classification and Coding Certification Examination.