MS Health Care Informatics Student Handbook
2025-2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is intended to provide information for the Online MS Health Care Informatics (HCI) program at the Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science (HSON) at the University of San Diego. Students are responsible for the information contained in this handbook, the *Archways Student Handbook* and the *University of San Diego Graduate Bulletin.* Refer to the *Graduate Bulletin* and this handbook to ascertain important dates and information.

It is the individual responsibility of the student to keep abreast of any and all changes made in the aforementioned catalogs and handbooks. This includes any and all penalties that may be incurred due to failure to adhere to an established policy or procedure. (Additional information can be found online in the *Archways Student Handbook* under *Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities).* The hope is that the information provided in this handbook contributes to an enjoyable and successful personal and academic journey for you at USD.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOOL OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCE

The faculty of the HSON views individuals as unique holistic beings in dynamic interaction with an ever-changing environment. Each person has the potential for self-direction and self-actualization. The faculty believes clients have the right to engage actively in decisions relative to their health and health care. An individual's potential is achieved through interaction with larger systems such as the family, community, and society.

Health is a dynamic state of being which is self-perceived and delineated by certain empirical parameters. This state of being is positively or negatively influenced by interactions with the environment, including the health care system. The faculty believes the health needs of clients are best served by a delivery system that is innovative and responsive to the needs of all people.

The faculty believes that learning is a continuing process that involves changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Consistent with this belief, the faculty provides learning experiences that foster critical thinking and believe that students are accountable for their own learning. The faculty believes that they have a responsibility to assist students to advance in the community of health care professionals.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science is a community of progressive scholars in an intellectually rigorous, research-intensive environment. We educate graduate level nurses and healthcare informaticists to optimize health, promote healing, and alleviate suffering through reflective practice, knowledge generation, service to the community, and leadership at local and global levels. We seek to deepen our commitment to social justice by influencing health policy and by promoting an ethical approach to nursing characterized by compassion and respect for the dignity of the individual.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The MS-HCI program supports the University's mission and philosophy by preparing students to work with diverse groups through its emphasis on health care for vulnerable populations. Faculty are committed to teaching excellence and a values-based curriculum, continuing to emphasize the value and dignity of each individual. The intent of all programs is to graduate masters-prepared informaticists who are individuals that display excellence, a multicultural perspective, and appreciation of the needs of vulnerable populations.

Core Values of the HSON

- Cultural respect and sensitivity for self and others
- Ethical, moral, behaviors
- Commitment and loyalty
- Compassion, empathy, advocacy, support
- Honesty and integrity
- Flexibility and creativity
- Professionalism
- Leadership
- Excellence
- Self-directed learning
- Teaching/learning/praxis
- Critical thinking
- Scholarship

PROGRAM GOALS FOR STUDENTS IN THE ONLINE MS-HCI PROGRAM

The goals of the MS-HCI program are to:

1. Provide leadership in integrating research into practice.
2. Utilize research-based evidence as a foundation for practice.
3. Apply information technology to enhance health care education, practice, and research.
4. Engage in multi-sectoral collaboration to improve health care delivery, assuming responsibility as deemed appropriate.
5. Provide leadership in formulating and implementing policy that contributes to ongoing improvement of health care delivery.
6. Practice from an ethical and legal perspective that acknowledges conflicting values and rights as they affect health care decisions.
7. Assume and develop advanced roles to meet societal needs in a rapidly changing national and global health care arena.
8. Provide innovative services that promote health and quality of life for culturally diverse individuals, families and populations.
9. Analyze emerging issues in health care, technologies and society as a basis for enacting social change in ways that foster health.

Program Learning Objectives (PLOs) of the HCI Program are:

1. Health – refers to biomedical and health sciences underlying the American Medical Informatics Association's (AMIA) five major informatics areas: translational bioinformatics, clinical research informatics, clinical informatics, consumer health informatics, and population informatics. The biomedical and health sciences aim to understand and improve health. To identify and develop solutions to bioinformatics problems, students must understand the history, goals, methods (including data and information used and produced), and current challenges of the major health sciences including human biology, genomics, clinical and translational science, healthcare delivery, personal health, and population health.

2. Information Science and Technology – refers to the key concepts, methods, and tools for creating, acquiring, storing, representing, accessing, merging, organizing, transferring, analyzing, reporting, and visualizing data, information, and knowledge. It also includes the methods and tools for protection of the data, information, and knowledge from unauthorized access. Included are understanding how information is used and the ability to assess the information needs of users. Familiarity is required with basic computer science terminology and concepts including terms and concepts related to information systems and computer programming, information retrieval, ontologies, business intelligence, analytics, and user interface design.
3. Social and Behavioral Science – refers to basic social, behavioral, psychological, and management theories, methods, and models as well as the legal and regulatory frameworks that seek to describe human actions and interactions as well as human behavior in society. It includes concepts from the fields such as sociology, economics, anthropology, political science, law, psychology, management, and cognitive sciences. It is concerned with the application of social, behavioral, psychological, and management theories, methods, and models to the design, implementation, and evaluation of health information behaviors at the levels of individual, social group, organizations, and society, which are influenced by laws and regulations. The purpose is to contribute to decreasing health damaging behaviors and improving health promoting behaviors and psychosocial well-being through health informatics perspectives.
4. Health Information Science and Technology – refers to the array of health information science and technology methods, tools, and standards for collecting, organizing, representing, sharing, integrating, using, governing and learning from biomedical and health data, information, and knowledge, across the entire spectrum of informatics domains. Systems design and development addresses standards, integration, interoperability, and protection of information. These competencies also address computational thinking, which includes problem solving, systems design, and understanding human behavior, as associated with computer science.
5. Human Factors and Socio-technical Systems – refers to the interactions between human behaviors (physical, social, cognitive, and psychological) and information technologies. People and organizations are the ultimate users of health information and technologies. This domain draws on the social, behavioral, cognitive, economic, human factors engineering, and management and systems sciences in considering the needs, workflows, and practices of individuals and organizations in the context of information systems and technology.
6. Social and Behavioral Aspects of Health – refers to action(s) taken by an individual, groups of individuals, or an organization to manage the health of an individual or population. It entails social determinants and patient-generated data, analyses of problems arising from health or disease, the implications of these problems on daily activities, and the practical solutions to managing these problems. Patient behavior (that may be affected by genotypes and phenotypes), health literacy, informed decision making, patient engagement, and patient activation are examples of issues in this domain. Other common topics in this domain, depending on the program focus, may include health-behavioral paradigms such as health and healthcare self-management, substance abuse, utilization of healthcare services, characteristics of nutrition, exercise/physical activity habits, organizational network analyses, precision medicine and individualized care, etc.
7. Social, Behavioral, and Information Science and Technology Applied to Health – refers to the integration of social, business, human factors, behavioral, and information sciences and technology on the design,

implementation, and evaluation of health informatics solutions. The application of health technologies and clinical and/or business processes can impact individual and community health outcomes at numerous levels from molecular and biological systems to healthcare and organizational protocols, to social systems and population health.

8. Professionalism – refers to the level of excellence or competence that is expected of a health informatics professional and includes such concepts as the maintenance and utilization of knowledge and technical skills, which may be dependent upon the application area of the training program; commitment to professional ethical principles including those in AMIA's Code of Ethics; and maintenance of the highest standards of excellence in the field including professional development. In health informatics, there is a particular emphasis on preserving the confidentiality, privacy, and security of patient and other health data and information and balancing it with appropriate stakeholder access.
9. Interprofessional Collaborative Practice – refers to the shared, coordinated work among peers from different professions in order to achieve a common goal or mission. The work may range from local projects to those on a national and international scale and should be performed in an ethical manner that involves honesty, integrity, trust, and respect. Part of this domain is teamwork and team science, which involves drawing on individual team members' strengths and expertise and assigning designated roles and methods to achieve the goals and mission. ICP requires effective communication skills. In summary, the domain requires mastery of values/ethics, roles/responsibilities, interprofessional communication, and team/teamwork.
10. Leadership – refers to the interactive process for which the output is vision, guidance, and direction. Essentials of leadership include vision, communication skills, stewardship, acting as a change agent, and the developing and renewing of followers and future leaders. Leaders must envision goals, set priorities, manage change, make decisions, communicate, serve as a symbol of one who is willing to take risks and has credible expertise, and guide others by motivating other leaders as well as those who will follow. The concept of followership refers to a role held by certain individuals in an organization, team, or group. Specifically, it is the capacity of an individual to actively follow a leader. For leaders to be successful at leadership, they must possess the following characteristics: credibility, honesty, competence, ability to inspire, and the ability to formulate and communicate a vision.

ACCREDITATION/APPROVAL

The HSON is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The HCI program is a HIMSS (Health Information Management Systems Society) approved academic partner.

MS-HCI PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The program of study includes the ten-course prescribed curriculum – each course is 3-units. Courses will be offered year-round with three semesters every year; spring, summer, and fall. Each semester is 14 weeks in length. You will take two courses per semester. Courses will run for seven weeks each with a one or two week break in between semesters. You can expect to graduate in five semesters after successfully completing all ten courses.

Each 3-unit course will include 37.5 hours of core instructional time. Additional homework, research, and study time is required. **You can expect to spend 15-18 hours per week in each course in order to be successful.**

STUDENT ADVISING AND REGISTRATION

The MS-HCI Program Coordinator will serve as your advisor during your program. Your advisor will ensure that you meet all academic requirements for the program, help resolve issues and problems, and assist in exploring future professional goals and educational options. Students will be manually enrolled for each semester (including Spring, Summer, and Fall terms) by your Program Coordinator. Once registered for a semester, students will receive an email confirmation of the registration. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Program Coordinator if they do not wish to be enrolled in a semester. In that case, a Leave of Absence would be required. For drop and withdrawal policy and deadlines, view the academic calendars found on the MSHCI Student Success Center webpage: onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/studentsuccess/hci

MS-HCI Program Administration

- Dorothy O'Hagan, MNLM, RHIA – HCI Program Director
- Tony Rosales, RN, DNP, FNP-BC – HCI Academic Coordinator
- Ashley Dominguez, Online Program Coordinator

MS-HCI CURRICULUM

The HCI curriculum integrates health care technology, leadership, and business knowledge and skills in preparing graduates for leadership in healthcare informatics in a variety of positions within health care organizations. Dorothy O'Hagan is the Director of the MS-HCI program, and Dr. Tony Rosales is the Academic Coordinator and serves as academic advisor to all HCI online students.

The program prepares individuals to function as clinical Informaticists as well as many other roles in health care. Students specialize by selecting a program focus in one of two concentrations: Health Care Informatics (HCI) or Health Care Analytics (HCA).

CAPSTONE PREPRATIONS: SAVE YOUR WORK*

Students must save their work from every course in the program. You will need this coursework for the Capstone which is taken in the student's final semester. It is recommended to save on a cloud-based application like Google Drive, DropBox, etc. You will not have access to your coursework once the course is over.

Course Descriptions MS in Health Care Informatics Online Program:

HCIN 540 Introduction to Health Care Information Management (3 units):
This course provides foundational knowledge and skills in health information management, informatics, and U.S. healthcare delivery, focusing on computer hardware, network architecture, electronic health records (EHRs), and healthcare software applications. It covers regulatory compliance, patient privacy, information security, and healthcare reimbursement while exploring current healthcare delivery trends, EHRs, interoperability, precision medicine, and healthcare database management and data analysis skills.

HCIN 542 Systems Analysis and Design for Health Care Informatics (3 units):
This foundational course in the MS Degree in Health Care Informatics equips students with the essential knowledge and skills required for the planning, analysis, design, and implementation of computer-based information and technology systems within healthcare settings. Topics covered encompass the complete spectrum of system development, project management, and technology integration and include: the systems development life cycle, project management skills, requirement analysis and specification, feasibility and cost-benefit analysis, workflow analysis, process improvement/optimization leveraging techniques such as Lean Six Sigma, and Agile, logical and physical design, prototyping, system validation, change and communication management, deployment, human factors, and post-implementation review. Through a structured design, students gain a deep understanding of these critical elements, preparing them to navigate the complex landscape of health informatics and contribute effectively to healthcare technology advancements.

HCIN 543 Database Design and Knowledge Management (3 units):
This course offers opportunities for students to acquire advanced database skills. Applied skills, emphasizing database design, data structuring, modeling and the development of database management systems are examined. Fundamental competencies in knowledge management, change management, and system engineering as they pertain to the healthcare environment and related fields are explored. Students will design and manipulate databases using software applications, such as Structured Query Language (SQL), to resolve selected operational problems.

HCIN 544 Advanced Health Care Information Management (3 units):
This course explores advanced healthcare information management topics, focusing on cybersecurity, interoperability, emerging trends in technology, and health system leadership. Ethical considerations and professional practice are central to the discussions. Privacy, security risk assessments, and comprehensive security plans for health systems are examined. Students will apply reflective practice to extract meaningful insights from leadership activities.

HCIN 546 M.S. Health Care Informatics Capstone (3 units):
This capstone course marks the conclusion of the online MS Health Care Informatics, designed for an in-depth exploration of the field of health informatics with a focus on its application across various health science areas. Students will explore how information technology and healthcare intersect to address modern challenges in health sciences, emphasizing the evaluation of health information technology systems in meeting current healthcare needs. The course culminates with each student completing a project that will be presented for professional and peer evaluation. Additionally, the course includes the development of a reflective ePortfolio and an exploration of current issues in Health Informatics within the context of a rapidly evolving healthcare delivery system.

HCIN 547 Health Care Analytics (3 units):
The course emphasizes the practical application of data analytics in addressing specific clinical queries, crafting clinical decision support rules, and employing precision medicine concepts. Students will develop the practical skills necessary to use various types of clinical data in addressing clinical inquiries using an evidenced-based approach. A range of clinical data sets will be examined including those at the population level. Through clinical case studies students will develop their data analytics expertise.

HCIN 552 Clinical Documentation: Electronic Medical Record Systems (3 units):
Students will engage in a comprehensive exploration of clinical documentation systems. This course offers a blend of theoretical knowledge and practical application, with a strong focus on experiential learning using an academic electronic health record system. Students will trace the historical trajectory of clinical documentation systems, gaining insight into their development and evolution over time. Students will examine the intricate hardware and software requirements essential for Electronic Health Records (EHRs). A problem-based learning approach is employed to cultivate students' proficiency in developing clinical rules and alert systems for clinical information systems. These skills will be applied for purposes such as quality assessment, risk analysis, billing processes, bioinformatics, genomics, and research applications. Emphasis is placed on understanding the regulatory landscape surrounding EHRs, including compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA), requirements from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and information security regulations.

HCIN 556 Health Care Leadership, Values, and Social Justice (3 units):
This course explores the role of leadership in driving innovation and change in healthcare organizations. Students will examine leadership theories, ethics, values, and social justice principles and their relevance in the healthcare setting. Project implementation strategies will be explored. An experiential learning approach is used, enabling participants to gain practical experience, develop transferable and marketable skills, and engage in reflective practices to foster leadership growth. The knowledge and skills acquired through this experience are designed to enhance competencies in leading within diverse healthcare settings.

HCIN 600 Population Health Analytics (3 units):
This course focuses on the Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s Triple Aim and how data analytics can be used to identify and address health disparities. Methods for measuring and analyzing population disease burden are explored. Students will apply various data sets, including disease registries, electronic health records, claims data, and socio-economic data, to measure, trend, and analyze the impact of disease on various populations.

HCIN 615 Research Fundamentals and Biostatistics (3 units):
This course focuses on advanced methods and tools aimed at managing a diverse array of healthcare challenges. Students will develop skills to evaluate data for the purpose of formulating, resolving, and empirically testing data-driven hypotheses. It examines the application of quantitative and qualitative data, and biostatistics, to critically assess healthcare programs and research endeavors. Pivotal domains of data stewardship and data governance are examined. Information security, privacy, and confidentiality are discussed as related to the roles of an informaticist and data analyst. Complementing these core topics, the curriculum also explores emerging trends in healthcare, data science, genomics, and bioinformatics.

HCIN 620 Machine Learning Applications to Health Care (3 units):
This course will explore the application of machine learning (ML) to the health care setting. ML is a field of computer science that trains computers to recognize patterns in complex data sets and formulate predictions

based upon designed algorithms. ML can be used to predict hospital readmission, identify patients who may develop hospital acquired infections, and support diagnostic reasoning for clinicians. The course will explore various ML methods to design algorithms for solving common clinical problems. In addition, students will gain a basic understanding of how ML methods can learn from data to find underlying patterns useful for prediction, classification, clustering, and exploratory data analysis.

HCIN 630 Health Care Law and Risk Management (3 units):
This course explores the legal principles and strategies for minimizing risk and liability within healthcare systems. Through the examination of case studies, students will review legal and ethical dilemmas arising in healthcare. The laws and regulations governing information management, patient rights, patient privacy (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act HIPAA), and quality management in healthcare are explored. Students will use various quality management tools, such as Root Cause Analysis (RCA) and a Failure Mode Effect Analysis (FMEA), to address liability issues within the healthcare setting.

CERTIFICATION

MS-HCI graduates are eligible for certification through the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS).

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Computer laptop
You must own or have unrestricted access to a computer for this program. A fast Internet connection is also mandatory. Computers should be Windows-based (Mac-based computers are not supported) and have a minimum of 512 GB SSD storage, 16-32 GB memory (RAM), and a processor of Intel Core i5 13th Gen or above.

Mac Users - not recommended.
If a student decides to purchase and use a Mac OS device such as: iMac, Mac Pro, MacBook, MacBook Air or MacBook Pro, the student is responsible for the purchase and maintenance of a windows emulation software for MAC OS that will allow you to run windows-based software programs that are required in HCI Courses. Please note, USD IT Help Desk and USD Faculty will not be able to support Mac users.

Minimum Laptop Specifications MS-HCI Program

The following is a guide for assessing if your laptop meets **minimum** operating requirements for use with our Learning Management System, Canvas: canvas.sandiego.edu as well as other required applications such as MS SQL and Tableau.

PC Requirements:

- Operating System: 32-bit and 64-bit Versions of Windows Vista, Windows 7, and Windows 8.
- Windows 10 is NOT supported
- Only genuine, U.S. English, French, Portuguese, Swedish, and British versions of Windows Operating Systems are supported.
- CPU Processor: 1.86 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo or greater
- RAM: highest recommended for the operating system or 2GB
- Hard Drive: highest recommended for the operating system or 1GB of available space.
- High speed internet connection.
- Screen Resolution must be 1024x768 or higher.

- Adobe Reader (Version 9 or 11) is required for exams containing PDF attachments.
- Administrator level account permissions (this means you can add software to the device).

Electronic Mail

All USD graduate students are required to have a USD email account (@sandiego.edu). The University may conduct official business by sending notices or other information to the student's USD email address. It is the student's responsibility to regularly check his or her USD account and to respond to any notices or information in a timely manner. Failure to check the USD email account will not be considered a legitimate reason for a policy exception. Students should notify the HSON as soon as they receive their email address so the student's name can be placed on the HSON student email distribution list.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Grading Policy

Since students enrolled in the program are admitted directly to a graduate degree program, policies and procedures applicable to them are the same as those for other graduate students in the university and the school. These general policies and procedures are provided below along with sources where students are acquainted with them. Exceptions to general policies and procedures specific to the program are noted herein. All candidates for the MS-HCI degree must successfully complete all 12, 3- unit prescribed courses. Because these programs are competency-based, each student must achieve a letter grade of no less than a B- in each course and maintain an overall minimum GPA of 3.0.

HSON Grading Scale

93 – 100%	= A
90 – 92.99%	= A-
87 – 89.99%	= B+
83 – 86.99%	= B
80 – 82.99%	= B-
77 – 79.99%	= C+
73 – 76.99%	= C
70 – 72.99%	= C-
60 – 69.99%	= D
59.99% and below	= F

Dropping & Withdrawing Courses

Students will register for two prescribed courses each semester. All courses must be dropped prior to the first day of the semester to receive a 100% tuition refund* and within the first three days of the start date of the semester to receive a 95% tuition refund.* No refund will be provided after the third day of the semester for either class. *During the first semester of enrollment, any tuition refund amounts will not include the non-refundable enrollment deposit amount (5% of tuition). After the first three days of the start of the semester and before the start of the fifth week/module, students have the option to withdraw from their courses with a

0% refund and a grade of “W” on their transcript (not included in GPA). Once the fifth week of the course starts, students are no longer able to withdraw from their course and will receive the grade earned. Students who discontinue class attendance and neglect to withdraw officially from the course are subject to failing the class.

USD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Academic Integrity

The University is an academic institution, an instrument of learning. As such, the University is predicated on the principles of scholastic honesty. It is an academic community, all of whose members are expected to abide by ethical standards both in their conduct and in their exercise of responsibilitytoward other members of the community. Academic dishonesty is an affront to the integrity of scholarship at USD and a threat to the quality of learning.

An act of academic dishonesty may be either a serious violation or an infraction. The instructor or supervisor of the academic exercise will have responsibility for determining that an act is an infraction or may be a serious violation.

Serious violations are the following acts:

a. Examination Behavior. Any intentional giving or use of external assistance during an examination shall be considered a serious violation if knowingly done without express permission of the instructor giving the examination.
b. Fabrication. Any intentional falsification or invention of data, citation, or other authority in an academic exercise shall be considered a serious violation; unless the fact of falsification or invention is disclosed at the time and place it is made.
c. Unauthorized Collaboration. If the supervisor of an academic exercise has stated that collaboration is not permitted, intentional collaboration between one engaged in the exercise and another shall be considered a serious violation by the one engaged in the exercise and by the other if the other knows of the rule against collaboration.
d. Plagiarism. Any intentional passing off of another's ideas, words, or work as one's own shall be considered a serious violation. Refer to the APA writing manual regarding how to cite. All students will be required to submit their papers through a plagiarism checker such as Turnitin or other means of checking for plagiarism.
e. Misappropriation of Resource Materials. Any intentional and unauthorized taking or concealment of course or library materials shall be considered a serious violation if the purpose of the taking or concealment is to obtain exclusive use, or to deprive others of use, of such materials.
f. Unauthorized Access. Any unauthorized access of an instructor's files or computer account shall be considered a serious violation.
g. Serious Violations Defined by Instructor. Any other intentional violation of rules or policies established in writing by a course instructor or supervisor of an academic exercise is a serious violation in that course or exercise.

Infractions are the following acts:

a. Any unintentional act is an infraction that, if it were intentional, would be a serious violation.
b. Any violation of the rules or policies established for a course or academic exercise by the course instructor or supervisor of the academic exercise is an infraction in that course or exercise if such a violation would not constitute a serious violation.

Academic dishonesty, and allegations of academic dishonesty, are matters of university-wide concern in the same way that academic integrity is a matter of university-wide concern. Students bear the responsibility not

only for their own academic integrity but also for bringing instances of suspected academic dishonesty to the attention of the proper authorities. Members of the faculty are obligated, not only to the University but also to the students they supervise, to deal fully and fairly with instances and allegations of academic dishonesty. The University administration bears the responsibility of dealing fairly and impartially with instances and allegations of academic dishonesty. For further information about this policy contact Associated Students at (619) 260-4715 or sandiego.edu/associatedstudents/.

The University of San Diego is committed to upholding standards that promote respect and human dignity in an environment that fosters academic excellence and professionalism. It is the policy of the university to maintain an educational and work environment free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment. To that end, the university prohibits and does not tolerate unlawful discrimination against or harassment of its employees, students or applicants for employment or admission on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy, age, physical disability, mental disability, or other characteristic protected by federal or state law, unless a particular characteristic is a bona fide requirement of the position.

Non-Discrimination
All members of the university community are expected to uphold this policy. Engaging in unlawful discrimination or harassment will result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the university. Unlawful discrimination may occur when an individual is treated less favorably with respect to the terms and conditions of employment or education, or with respect to the individual's receipt of employment or educational benefits, because of his or her membership in a protected class. Accordingly, all employment-related decisions, including but not limited to decisions relating to recruitment, hiring, promotion, transfers, benefits and any other terms and conditions of employment, will be made without regard to the employee's or applicant's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy, age, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, covered veteran status, genetic information, or other characteristic protected by federal or state law. Similarly, all education-related programs and activities, including but not limited to admissions, financial aid, academic programs, research, housing, athletics, and other extracurricular activities, will be administered without regard to the student's or applicant's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy, age, physical disability, mental disability, or other characteristic protected by federal or state law.

The university does not by this non-discrimination statement disclaim any right it might otherwise lawfully have to maintain its commitment to its Catholic identity or the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Harassment
Harassment includes verbal, physical or visual conduct when the conduct creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile working or educational environment, or unreasonably interferes with individual job or academic performance. Verbal harassment may include but is not limited to epithets, derogatory comments or slurs based upon one of the individual's characteristics noted above. Physical harassment may include but is not limited to assault, impeding or blocking movement, or any physical interference with normal work or movement, when directed at an individual because of the individual's protected characteristic. Visual forms of harassment may include but are not limited to derogatory posters, cartoons or drawings based on an individual's protected characteristic.

In addition, prohibited sex discrimination covers sexual harassment, including sexual violence.
Sexual harassment includes any request or demand for sexual favors that is implicitly or expressly a condition of

employment, continued employment, receipt of an employment benefit, admission to the university, participation in educational programs or activities, or evaluation of academic performance. Examples of conduct that could give rise to sexual harassment, include but are not limited to: sexual advances or suggestions; unwelcome sexually-oriented remarks; dirty jokes; the display or distribution of offensive photographs, e-mails, posters or cartoons; any unwelcome, intentional touching of the intimate areas of another person's body; or physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is unable to give consent.

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities operated by recipients of federal financial aid assistance. Sex harassment, including sexual violence, is a form of prohibited sex discrimination. The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, including the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act, requires colleges and universities to have procedures in place to respond to incidents of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

The University of San Diego has a title IX office located in Maher Hall, room 101. You can refer the Title IX and Equal Employment Opportunity Programs website at: TitleIX@sandiego.edu.

In order to address its responsibilities under these laws, the university has implemented standards, reporting procedures, and response protocols that apply to incidents of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation. For more information, please see the university's Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Reporting and Response Standards and Protocols.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND GUIDANCE FOR ONLINE STUDENTS

All students will adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy of the University of San Diego. As on online student, you will be asked to sign a pledge prior to starting each course in the program acknowledging that you have read the Academic Integrity Policy as well as the Guidelines for Online Students.

As an online student, you are encouraged to reach out to your fellow students in the online classroom to build community, to discuss topics, and to ask each other questions, but there are limits to this collaboration. As a student at University of San Diego you are bound by the Honor Code established by the University.

In accordance with the University of San Diego's Mission Statement, the Honor Code establishes a standard of integrity which is aligned with the University's Core Values: *Academic Excellence, Knowledge, Community, Ethical Conduct, and Compassionate Service.* The promotion of academic integrity should take place in the context of a commitment to creating a culture of integrity that encompasses all constituencies of the university including students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni and trustees. Only through campus-wide engagement will the University achieve its goal of "developing ethical and responsible leaders committed to the common good."

Standards of Conduct

Adherence to standards of honesty and integrity precludes engaging in, causing, or knowingly benefiting from any violation of academic integrity. Without regard to purpose, the following violations are prohibited.

Cheating

Cheating is the use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, and study aids, as well as unauthorized collaboration on examinations and other academic exercises. It is the responsibility of students to consult with their professors concerning what constitutes permissible collaboration. Cheating or helping others cheat is academic fraud. Check your course syllabus for more guidance about your assignments and assessments, such as quizzes, projects, papers, and exams. You may see rules such as these:

OK: Listening to lectures with another student.
Not OK: Working simultaneously with another student when doing an assignment.

OK: Studying together online or offline for the midterm.
Not OK: Taking the midterm with another student and discussing the answers to the questions.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of presenting, as one's own the ideas or writings of another; plagiarism, in any of its forms, violates academic integrity. While different academic disciplines have different norms of attribution, all strive to recognize and value individuals' contributions to the larger body of knowledge. It is the responsibility of students to consult with their professors in order to understand the norms of attribution in each discipline and area of study. Check your course syllabus for more guidance about your research assignments. You may see rules such as these:

OK: Researching the web or "Google-ing" a topic for a written assignment or discussion question.
Not OK: Copying or paraphrasing text from a website without citing the source.

False Citations

False citation is attribution to an incorrect or fabricated source; false citation is academic fraud. False citation seriously undermines the integrity of the academic enterprise.

Submitting the Same Work for Multiple Assignments

Students may not submit work (in identical or similar form) for multiple assignments without the prior, explicit approval of all faculty to whom the work will be submitted. This includes work first produced at USD or at another institution attended by the student.

Submitting False Data

False data is information that has been fabricated, altered, or contrived in such a way as to be misleading; the submission of false data is academic fraud.

OK: Discussing online or offline the discussion question topic.
Not OK: Writing an answer together and submitting the same or slightly paraphrased text.

Falsifying Academic Documentation

Forging or altering academic documentation (including transcripts, signatures, letters of recommendation, certificates of enrollment or standing, registration forms, and medical certifications) concerning oneself or others is academic fraud.

Abuse of Library Privileges

Depriving others of equal access to library materials constitutes a violation of academic integrity. This includes sequestering library materials for the use of an individual or group, refusal to respond to recall notices, and the removal or attempt to remove library materials from any University library without authorization.

Abuse of Shared Electronic Media

Depriving others of equal access to shared electronic media used for academic purposes constitutes a violation of academic integrity. This includes actions that result in the damage or sabotage of computer systems.

Reference

University of San Diego Honor Code (2019, May). As found at: sandiego.edu/conduct/documents/Honor-Code.pdf

Generative AI Guidelines:

- Transparency: If you are using ChatGPT and similar programs you must be transparent about your use and disclose any generated content as being produced by an AI program. This includes, but is not limited to, written assignments, research papers, and other forms of communication through citations and documentation.
- Responsibility: You are responsible for critically evaluating the accuracy, reliability, and quality of any information generated by ChatGPT and similar programs and verifying it through additional sources if necessary.
- Critical Thinking: You are encouraged to use ChatGPT and similar programs as a tool to support your own learning and critical thinking, but not as a replacement for independent research and analysis. The use of ChatGPT and similar programs must be accompanied by the development of your critical thinking skills and an understanding of their limitations.

Note: Responses generated by ChatGPT, an AI language model developed by OpenAI, were used as a source of information for these guidelines.

ACADEMIC PROBATION AND DISQUALITICATION (RETENTION AND DISMISSAL)

To be in good academic standing and to be eligible to graduate, students must maintain in their program courses the minimum semester and Grade Point Average (GPA) that is required by their program. See "Grading Policy" regarding the minimum acceptable grade for courses and the minimum overall grade point average required in the program. The minimum GPA requirement for the MS-HCI is 3.0 calculated on a 4.0 scale. Any student who has completed at least 6 units of course work and whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation. At the end of the term in which the probationary student has registered for his/her next 6 units, a review will be conducted. Students who have not raised the cumulative USD GPA for graduate program courses to the acceptable level at that time will be disqualified from the program.

In addition, to dismissal for academic reasons (see Retention/Academic Probation and Disqualification above), students can be dismissed from the University for violating any of the following university policies:

- ➢ Rules of Conduct
- ➢ Academic Integrity Policy

These policies and other Procedural Guidelines for the Disciplinary Process and Disciplinary Sanctions are outlined and available to students at sandiego.edu/conduct/resources/index.php. Dismissal from the program is the most extreme form of sanction for violation of these policies, but less extreme sanctions may be employed if warranted. Students who wish to appeal their disqualification must do so in writing to the Dean of the School of Nursing within 10 calendar days of receiving such notice.

The HSON faculty realizes that students encounter life circumstances that may make it difficult to continue with educational pursuits. When such circumstances occur, every effort is made to retain students in their program of study. Retention rates for all HSON programs are above 90%. Similar efforts will be made to retain students in the MS-HCI program. Students who are unable to maintain continuous enrollment need to complete a Petition for Leave of Absence form. The Academic Coordinator must approve the leave of absence. Failure to maintain continuous enrollment may result in suspension from the program. Students

who have been dropped from the program must apply for readmission unless a Petition for Leave of Absence form is on file and current. A leave of absence may be granted for up to one year, and only under extreme circumstances will a student be granted a second leave of absence. Students on academic probation are not normally eligible for a leave of absence.

Financial aid is usually suspended for students on leave of absence. In addition, the leave of absence may trigger the beginning of the loan repayment period for students with loan deferments. Students should petition for leave prior to the requested leave period. Students who find it necessary to discontinue enrollment during a term may also petition for a leave, however, they must be in good standing and officially withdraw from their courses by submitting a Notice of Withdrawal form within the approved deadline.

GRIEVANCE POLICIES

The university has policies regarding both grievances related to hate crimes and harassment and grievances regarding grades. These policies are available in the *Graduate Catalog*. In keeping with the university policies, hate crimes or harassment within the HSON are reported to the Dean. Grade grievances are first addressed with the faculty member involved. If not resolved at that level, they may be brought to the Dean. Failing resolution at that level, the student grievant may submit a written request for a grievance hearing by the Student Affairs Committee of the HSON. In the case of such a grievance, faculty and/or student representatives who could be in a conflict of interest position regarding the grievance will be asked to excuse themselves from the proceedings. Faculty content experts may be necessary to help review the grade grievance. If such members are not on the committee, all efforts will be made to invite an expert to serve on the grievance committee for that hearing. To obtain a copy of the Graduate Student Affairs Committee by-laws, go to: sandiego.edu/grad-life/documents/GSG%20By-laws%202023-2024.pdf

INCOMPLETE GRADES

The grade of “Incomplete” ("I") may be recorded to indicate that at least 75% of the requirements of a course has been completed, but, for a legitimate reason, 25% or less of the work remains to be completed; and that the record of the student in the course justifies the expectation that he or she will complete the work and obtain a passing grade by the deadline. It is the student's responsibility to explain to the instructor the reasons for non-completion of the work and to request an “incomplete” grade **prior** to the posting of final grades. The instructor should discuss with the student the conditions and deadline for completion, whenever possible, and should document the conditions and deadline using the Petition for Grade of Incomplete. The “incomplete” grade is not counted in the computation of the grade point average, nor is credit earned for the semester/session for which the grade was authorized.

Students who receive a grade of “incomplete” must submit all missing work at maximum two weeks after the course end date otherwise; the "I" grade will become an "F. A faculty member assigning a grade of “incomplete” will complete a Petition for Grade of Incomplete, indicating the reason for the “incomplete”, and attach a copy of the form to the grade roster when turning in grades. A copy of this form will be placed in the student’s file.

Students receiving financial aid should be aware that taking an “incomplete” grade might affect their eligibility for financial aid by their failure to earn the appropriate amount of credit within a year. When the work is completed, a Removal of Incomplete or Change of Grade form will be completed by the instructor and signed by the associate dean. One copy is then placed in the student’s file and the original is sent to the registrar.

GRADUATION/COMPLETION OF DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

In order to be cleared for degree completion, students, in consultation with the Academic Coordinator must file a Petition for Graduation form. Students who meet the deadline for May graduation will receive their degree at that time and students who fulfill all requisites for their degree in the summer will have their degree recorded in their transcript effective August 31st. Students who fail to meet the stipulated deadlines will not be permitted to graduate, even if all other graduation requirements have been met. In order to receive permission to attend commencement, eligible students must register and pay in full for their remaining units at USD no later than May 1st. The University of San Diego holds only ONE graduation ceremony each year. All graduates during the relevant academic year are welcome to participate in this May graduation ceremony.

Graduate students scheduled to receive their degree the following August who have nine (9) units or fewer of remaining work may participate if their work falls in the category of coursework, portfolio, practicum/fieldwork/student teaching, or internship. Such August graduates must take the remaining summer work at USD and they must register and pay for their remaining units by May 1st. If a candidate does not graduate at the expected time, the registrar will automatically roll the Petition for Graduation over to the next graduation period if it is in the same calendar year. If the graduation period extends beyond the calendar year for which the petition was filed, a new petition must be completed.

Student Dismissal

Students may be dismissed from the Online MS-HCI program for:

1. Failure to maintain established grade point average of 3.00 for all coursework.
2. Failure to make satisfactory academic progress toward their degree.
3. Failure to complete the program within the time limits for degree.
4. Failure to make satisfactory progress in the development of academic and practitioner skills.
5. Violations of ethics code(s) as established by applicable field of study and program area.
6. Violations of USD policies and the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities, including academic dishonesty and plagiarism.
7. Failure to maintain cooperative relationships with other students and/or faculty or failure to maintain satisfactory delivery of services to clients during fieldwork, including, but not limited to: internships, student teaching, practicum or service learning.

When any of the above concerns are raised, the student will meet with her or his Academic Coordinator to discuss the concern. The Academic Coordinator or her or his faculty designee(s) will provide the student with a written plan for improvement that specifies the nature of the concern(s) along with required steps for remediation for successful completion of the program. The Academic Coordinator or her or his faculty designee(s) will, on an ongoing basis evaluate the student's progress and written evaluation of progress will be sent to the student and placed in the student's file. In the event that satisfactory progress is not made within the time limits set by the plan, a written notification of dismissal will be sent to the student.

Students who are terminated for any reason may appeal for reinstatement in writing to Dean Hahn School of Nursing within ten calendar days of receiving notice of termination

Student Reinstatement

Students who fail to make satisfactory progress toward the required deadlines, who have dropped out of the program for any reason, or who have failed to return from an official Leave of Absence will be dismissed from the program. Students may apply for readmission. Depending upon the time and circumstances, the procedure for readmission may require a new personal statement of interest in the program, three (3) new letters of recommendation and a complete set of current transcripts. In considering the readmission request, faculty will evaluate previous coursework and other activities both in and out of the program. If the student is readmitted, the faculty may recommend redoing any or all of the student's coursework and work depending on the length of the time away from the program and the circumstances for leaving the program. There is no guarantee of readmission.

Transfer of Graduate Credit

Eligibility of transfer credit will be determined by the Academic Program Coordinator. It is recommended that students petition **prior** to their first semester in order to plan their academic program accurately.
Transfer petitions for previous work will not be accepted in the student's final semester unless the transfer course is being taken in the final semester.

Petition for Transfer of Graduate Credit.

The student must also request that an official transcript of the course be sent to the Graduate Records Office if the transcript was not included among the admissions documents. When both the petition and transcript are on file they will be reviewed in the Graduate Records Office for conformity to USD policies. Grade(s) awarded by the issuing institution will not be calculated in the student's overall grade point average or taken into account during probationary review.

Students may petition to transfer up to six (6) credits from another university under the following conditions:

1. Credit must be from an accredited, USD-approved university.
2. Credit must be at the graduate-level at the university of origin. The student is responsible for submitting acceptable supporting documentation.
3. Credit must be relevant to the USD degree program and be approved by the Program Coordinator.
4. Transfer courses cannot repeat essentially the same content of work taken at USD.
5. Credit may not be used (or have been used) toward any other degree.
6. Credit earned more than five (5) years prior to matriculation at USD will not be accepted.
7. A grade of "B" or higher must have been earned (grade of "pass" or "satisfactory" ordinarily is not acceptable).
8. Students must supply satisfactory documentation regarding course content for independent study or self-directed courses.
9. The number of credit hours transferred will be based on USD's semester credit system rounded down to the nearest full or half unit (multiply the number of quarter hours by .67 and round down). For example, four (4) quarter-hours x .67 = 2.68 which will be recorded as 2.5 USD semester-hour units). It is the student's responsibility to make up the difference if the total number of degree credits falls short of the requirement for the degree. The amount of USD credit awarded may not exceed the equivalent amount on the originating transcript.
10. Although transfer credit from other universities will be posted on the USD transcript, grades will not be posted or computed in the USD grade point average for probation/disqualification review.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **How should I keep track of the financial aid documents and additional forms?** It is suggested that students constantly monitor their student portal (mysandiego.edu) to receive the most up-to-date information regarding their financial aid.

2. **How many units do I need to take to be eligible for financial aid?** If a student drops below 4.5 semester units, they are no longer eligible to receive financial aid.

3. **What additional financial aid forms do I need to complete besides the FAFSA?** Every student's file is unique so in addition to completing an MPN and Entrance Loan Counseling they may have to complete: Verification paperwork, prove that they are actually the student (in front of a notary rep), C-Codes (Selective Service, Defaulted loans). FAFSA will contact student directly if these documents are necessary via their student portal.

4. **What are the interest rates for student loans available for graduate students?** Students are eligible for unsubsidized loans and GRAD Plus loans.

5. **What other forms do you suggest I complete?** It is advised that the student fill out the FERPA release form if they plan to allow someone else to access their personal information.

6. **How do I receive my financial aid award letter?** The award letter is sent via email. You will need to Accept or Deny the award electronically.

7. **Can financial aid be used to pay for books, course materials, computer software and hardware? If so what is the process?** Yes, financial aid can be used for any school related purpose. If students receive excess funding after their tuition and fees have been deducted, they can use those funds to assist with these expenses. However, you are advised to take out only what you need for the program

8. **Is financial aid awarded year-round?** There are specific deadlines in order to be awarded financial aid for all three (3) semesters. For the summer semester, there is an additional summer form to be completed in addition to FAFSA.

9. **Is there additional financial aid available for military personnel?** Yellow Ribbon is automatically awarded to inactive military and they can be 100% eligible depending on their service time. Tuition assistance is also accepted, but military students must be active duty to receive it. G.I. Bill requires students to provide a Certificate of Eligibility.

10. **What services does Student Accounts provide?** Student Accounts provides service to our online students with billing and payment of tuition, fees, financial aid updates, and registration access. You are encouraged to check your student portal regularly for updates.

11. **Is there payment plan option?** Yes. Online MS-HCI students have the option to pay in 2-5 equal installments dependent upon the semester and timing of sign-up; Student Accounts provide this option for a processing

fee of $50 per semester.

12. **What is your drop policy?** Both courses must be dropped prior to the first day of the semester to receive a 100% tuition refund* and within the first three days of the start date of the semester to receive a 95% tuition refund.* No refund will be provided after the third day of the semester for either class. *During the first semester of enrollment, any tuition refund amounts will not include the non-refundable enrollment deposit amount (5% of tuition).

13. **How do I know when to register for classes?** You will receive an email from your Program Coordinator once you have been registered for an upcoming semester. The email will include information such as - course titles, CRNs, financial aid considerations, and textbook information.

14. **What happens if I relocate during the online MS-HCI program?** Students must notify the university if they relocate to another state at any time during their program. If a student relocates, either temporarily or permanently, to a state not currently authorized as listed on the website, they will become ineligible to continue in their program due to state authorization regulations. Please review the unauthorized states before making any relocation plans.

PROGRAM CONTACTS AND IMPORTANT WEBSITES AND EMAILS

Academic Program Director Dorothy O'Hagan dohagan-11@sandiego.edu	**Online Academic Coordinator** Tony Rosales trosales@sandiego.edu	**Online Program Coordinator** Ashley Dominguez domingueza-12@sandiego.edu 619-260-7521

Student Portal my.sandiego.edu	**Canvas** canvas.sandiego.edu	**Technical Support** (619) 260-7900 sandiego.edu/its/ help@sandiego.edu
Copley Library (619) 260-4799 sandiego.edu/library copley@sandiego.edu	**Torero Bookstore** usdtorerostores.com	**Campus Card Services** (619) 260-5999 sandiego.edu/campuscard
Financial Aid Office 619-260-2700 sandiego.edu/torero-hub/financial-aid/	**Registrar** (619) 260-4600 x2888 registrar@sandiego.edu	**Student Financial Services** (619) 260-2700 (Option 3) studentaccounts@sandiego.edu sandiego.edu/finance/student-financial-services