Clinical Coder

Skills Training UK is a leading independent apprenticeships training provider with a proven track record in partnering with NHS Trusts. We are committed to helping you understand and use the opportunity of the Apprenticeship Levy to develop and deliver training which effectively supports your plans for patient-centred care and CQI.

This apprenticeship is designed for individuals working within an NHS or healthcare organisation who wish to build a career in clinical coding. A Clinical Coder is responsible for reading and analysing medical information such as patient notes/records, which then translate into alphanumeric codes that accurately represent the patient’s stay. The nationally recognised Clinical Coder Standards Training is included within the cost of the Apprenticeships.

Typical job roles include: Senior Clinical Coder, Clinical Coding Auditor, Clinical Coding Team Leader and Clinical Coding Manager.

Role Requirements

The learner must have the knowledge to be able to carry out (as a minimum) the following:

- Assess patient records and notes
- Identify and apply medical terminology into code
- Allocate diagnosis and procedural codes to patient records
- Extract information from all types of clinical documentation and assess relevant health record content
- Input clinical codes onto Patient Administration Systems
- Work under pressure to local financial deadlines
- Communicate with a wide range of stakeholders to gather and share information
- Undertake background research as necessary
- Identify data quality issues and take appropriate action

Employer Commitment

In order to ensure the learner’s successful progression, we request that their line manager participates in joint progress reviews at regular intervals throughout the apprenticeship.

Duration

Apprentices will typically spend 18 to 24 months working towards this Standard, with a minimum of 20% off-the-job training. An independent End Point Assessment must be conducted by the National School of Healthcare Science in order to complete the course.

Training and Support from Skills Training UK

During the apprenticeship the learner will have a dedicated trainer-assessor who will visit them within the workplace at least once per month in order to support their learning and development. They will also be supported between visits by offsite information, advice, guidance, academic progress and technical competence support. The trainer-assessor will work with the learner and line manager to ensure successful progression against all elements of the apprenticeship.
Eligibility

This will be determined and agreed between the employer and Skills Training UK. However, it is likely to include Level 2 qualifications in English, Maths and a Science subject (preferable Science/Biology). Apprentices without Level 2 English and Maths will need to achieve this prior to completing the end-point assessment.

For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement the apprenticeship’s English and maths minimum requirement is Entry Level 3.

Requirements: Behaviours, Skills and Knowledge

Below is a summary of some of the main Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours required for the Level 3 Clinical Coder.

Behaviours

- Agile, flexible and adaptable to meet changing work priorities
- Professionalism and emotional intelligence
- A thirst for knowledge and a willingness to learn from mistakes
- Emotional maturity and an ability to deal with direct exposure to sometimes disturbing patient records and notes, including photographs and attending hospital wards
- Adaptive to environment, working in both an office and busy healthcare setting

Skills and Knowledge

- Specific Clinical Coding Skills which include:
  - Completion of NHS Digital Anatomy and Physiology e-learning
  - Completion of the 21-day Clinical Coding Standards Course
  - Utilise OPCS-4 procedural classification to consistently apply correct coding to case notes and scenarios
  - Follow the rules, conventions and standards for clinical coding as defined by the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD)
  - Assimilate, analyse and retain specialist information

- Consistently and correctly apply the four-step coding process as set on the NHS Digital website when assigning codes for diagnoses and procedures
- Apply detailed knowledge of medical terminology, anatomical and physiological terms to translate the patients records into the correct codes
- Communication and Information Governance – including communicating effectively at all levels with a wide range of individuals, including clinicians, other hospital staff and colleagues
- Extraction and Evaluation of Data – for example, how to extract information from all types of clinical documentation and assess relevant health record content; correctly interpret data
- IT – including using different IT systems and applications and understanding how they link to other systems within the organisation, and how to navigate and use the NHS Digital Delen website
- Work Within Your Organisation – including working effectively with other departments, following policies and procedures, understanding the purpose of the Clinical Coder’s role within the organisation and where it sits in the wider environment

Independent End Point Assessment

To successfully complete the apprenticeship, the learner needs to pass an End Point Assessment. This is an independent assessment which has two stages:

- Clinical Coding Test. This consists of two papers - a multiple choice test and a series of clinical coding case studies, which are conducted in a controlled environment.
- Professional Discussion – this will be appropriately structured to draw out the best from the apprentice, including their competence in demonstrating the required knowledge, skills and behaviours. A Portfolio of Evidence, compiled by the learner during on-programme learning, will be used to inform the questioning during the Professional Discussion. The portfolio itself is not assessed.

The assessor from the National School of Healthcare Science will then decide whether to award successful apprentices with a pass or a distinction.