

**Lara****Health Information Manager
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My previous qualifications are a Bachelor of Education (in Secondary Science, majoring in Psychology, Biology and Junior Science) and a Bachelor of Letters with Honours in Women's Studies. I taught in country Victoria, London, and Melbourne for six years, then switched careers to a training and education position with a major funeral director for another four years. I then took a year off to address health issues and reassess my future career direction before commencing the 3 ½ year Bachelor of Health Information Management degree in 2001, graduating in mid 2004.

When I was first at university straight after school one of the other residents at my college was studying a degree in Medical Records Administration. I had never heard of it before, but it piqued my interest.

I have always enjoyed health related subjects, but didn't want to deal directly with patients. Over the years I reconsidered retraining as a HIM, but it wasn't until my husband was able to support me through my studies that I had the opportunity! After talking to practising HIMs, I was reassured that my personality style, interests and skill base were well suited to becoming a HIM. I was also very interested in the flexibility of the role and the ability to take the qualification in a number of different directions. I enjoy variety in my work!

Since my previous qualification was science/biology based, I had a good understanding of anatomy and physiology. Being a graduate meant that I had already learned how to study effectively and organise my time well, in addition to knowing how to write academically and how to research appropriately. Placements in hospitals and other health care agencies throughout my studies were invaluable in terms of hands-on learning and networking. I always enjoy seeing theory put into practice! My teaching and training background had made me very comfortable with giving class presentations and speaking to groups, so I didn't have any problems with those course requirements. I particularly enjoyed the coding and data analysis subjects.

I am currently working in a coding role two days per week. In addition to coding, my responsibilities include cancer registration and presenting at orientation sessions for new hospital staff. My first child was born while I was studying for my HIM degree, and my second is now just over one year old. It is terrific that I have been able to get satisfying and fulfilling part-time work that fits around my family responsibilities. While my children are still young my career is unlikely to change significantly – I plan to continue working two days per week for some time yet – but I know that the options are there to one day move in other directions or expand on my coding background. I am not interested in staff management, but enjoy data analysis and policy development, so maybe one day that is where my HIM career may take me!