

# A Resource Guide For Administrative Fellowships

Master of Health Administration  
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign  
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**MHA** AT  
**ILLINOIS**

This resource guide serves as only one resource for administrative fellowships. Information compiled here is from industry experts as well as feedback from UIUC MHA students who have gone through the application process. It is intended to give you an idea of what an administrative fellowship is and provide you with answers to some common questions.

Our hope is that students will continue to provide feedback about the administrative fellowship process so we can provide timely updates to this material.

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### *What is an administrative fellowship?*

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An administrative fellowship is one-or two-year specialized experiential opportunity for graduate students who have recently completed their advanced degree. Fellows get the chance to further develop their knowledge and skills in healthcare management by getting exposure to multiple clinical /administrative areas and leaders, and help support one or more projects or initiatives. The ultimate goal is that the fellow demonstrates they can take on progressive responsibilities during the fellowship and be ready to take on a leadership role when the fellowship concludes (hopefully at the site where the fellowship occurred!)

Healthcare organizations are the most common sites for administrative fellowships, but opportunities may be found in government entities or other health-related businesses.

These prestigious opportunities are **highly competitive**. Not all who desire a fellowship will obtain one.

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*When is the time to consider whether I want to pursue a fellowship?*

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The earlier the better, but before the end of your first year is ideal. Some larger organizations host informational webinars during the summer. It is highly recommended that you attend those so you can see if you are a good fit there before you spend time and sometimes money to apply. If you attend these webinars, use the opportunity to ask meaningful questions (and don't forget to introduce yourself).

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*What is the timeline of applying for fellowships?*

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Many fellowships open their applications in early fall. If you think you want to apply, update your resume with your summer experiences and be ready to apply in August/early September. It is common for interviews to begin in October. Some opportunities still filter in after fall, but fall is the busiest time for applications.

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*How can I find fellowships that are being offered?*

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If there are certain organizations you are interested in, peruse their websites. Even if the opportunity is not open at the time of your search, you may see references to their current administrative fellows or an announcement describing their application process. You may also contact the organization's Human Resources department and ask if administrative fellowships are offered there.

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## *How can I find fellowships that are being offered (cont.)?*

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Professional organizations such as ACHE (American College of Healthcare Executives) offer [a large list of fellowships](#). Students can view [additional listings](#) through NAFCAS - a central application portal for administrative fellowships. Consider setting up alerts on job boards (e.g., Indeed, LinkedIn) in preparation for administrative fellowship postings.

Additionally, it should be noted that students from our program have been chosen for administrative fellowships at the following locations:

- [Carle Foundation Hospital](#), Urbana IL
- [Community Health Systems](#), Corsicana TX
- [Springfield Memorial Hospital](#), Springfield IL

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## *What application materials should I expect to submit?*

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Like your graduate school application, be prepared to produce:

- A cover letter
- A current resume
- A personal statement
- Short answer question or essay responses
- 2-3 recommendation letters
- Transcripts - both undergraduate and graduate
- You may want to consider having a mentor, professor or teacher review your personal statement and resume.

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## *How much time does it take to complete an application?*

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It varies. If you utilize a system such as NAFCAS, you can re-use some of the same materials. Be aware though that each organization listed in NAFCAS may have different application requirements. If you apply outside of NAFCAS, you will need to spend some time updating organization names in your materials. Also note that some documents can be submitted in Word, but some may need to be converted to PDFs.

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### *How many fellowships should I apply for?*

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Be prudent as you complete applications for fellowships. The process of applying will require a lot of work, but also consider the interview process. Many fellowships will require multiple rounds of interviews and some interviews may require in-person meetings. We suggest that you limit your applications to a reasonable number of organizations, which will vary per student, so that your focus is not too greatly deferred from your academics.

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### *When can I expect a response on my application?*

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Some applicants hear within 1-2 days that they are being offered an interview or they are not being considered. Some organizations wait until they have made their final selection before notifying those that did not make the cut. Unfortunately, some organizations do not respond at all.

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### *How will the organization contact me?*

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You can expect either a phone call or email, although students reported that most contact occurs via email.

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*If I am selected for an interview, how will the interview take place?*

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Many interviews take place over video (e.g., Zoom), while some take place over the phone. Others may ask you to come in person and could include a dinner, especially for second interviews beyond an initial screening. Remember that interviews are a two-way street. You both are trying to find the right fit.

Some initial interviews may be more “screening” based - Do you seem prepared? Is your appearance professional? Do you communicate clearly? Do you show enthusiasm and interest? Do you smile? Other interviews are more formal where a standardized set of questions is asked of all applicants.

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*Who is generally involved in the interview?*

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Interviews can be more intimate, e.g., two people such as the hiring leader and the current administrative fellow. Others may be larger panels of 4-7 people. Be prepared that there may be multiple rounds of interviews, so you may have different experiences in each round.

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*What are some common questions I may be asked?*

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- How did your interest in healthcare begin?
- Why THIS fellowship?
- Why THIS location (for instance, they see you are from Illinois, but the fellowship is in Georgia)?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What do you want to gain from this fellowship?
- Tell us about a time you had to work with a team to resolve an issue.
- How will this fellowship contribute to your career goals?
- A question about ethics – e.g., what would you do if your direct supervisor asked you to edit a report so the data showed more favorable results?
- How do you deal with conflict?
- What is an accomplishment you are proud of?
- Tell us about a time that you had to work with someone who had a different personality from you and how did you deal with that?
- What does diversity, equity and inclusion mean to you?
- A fun question like - if you could be a superhero, who/what would it be?

Of course, this list only provides a sample of the questions you may be asked. Breathe, and repeat the question if you need to. Many questions do not have right or wrong answers. The interviewer is interested in your behaviors, results, preparedness, and enthusiasm. Practice your responses, then practice some more.

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## *Do you get paid during a fellowship?*

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Yes - the average salary for an administrative fellow is approximately \$50K based on a review of internet sources. Of course, this will depend on the organization and where the organization is located. You will likely be on your own though for living expenses, unless it is otherwise noted in the job posting.

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## *Advice From Former Students*

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Students who have gone through the application process have graciously shared some of their lesson learned and some other helpful hints.

- Just because you get an interview does not mean you will get the fellowship.
- When you submit through a centralized application portal like NAFCAS, you will pay for each submission.
- It takes time to prepare for the application process and the interview. Do not wait until the last minute to prepare.
- Shoot for the stars. If you do not apply, you will not even get the chance to be considered.
- Practice your responses to interview questions. You can place notes in inconspicuous places to jog your memory.
- Create a spreadsheet or some other tracking document to keep organized. Include items such as: due dates, how you applied (direct or through a CAS), location, webinar



dates, length of the program, application requirements, etc.

- For the video interviews, dress professionally and make sure your background is clean.
- Anytime you meet a professional in the industry, connect with them on LinkedIn and thank them for their time, advice, etc.
- Be prepared with questions to ask about the organization when you are interviewing. Consider questions beyond what they will expect you to ask (e.g., how many spots are available, what are the next steps, when do you expect to make a decision) and that are relevant to the fellowship position, your interest, and show you've done some homework on the organization.

Here are a couple of examples of questions that dig deeper:

- About the mission/vision/values
  - The mission says your organization supports the under-served members of this community. How have some of the previous fellows been able to engage in fulfilling this mission during their time here?
- In the news (most organizations have a Media/Press/News link)
  - I read in a recent press release that your organization received recognition as a “Great Place to Work”. What does leadership do here that helps you get that recognition?