



American College of
Healthcare Executives
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Fellowship Program FAQs

ACHE's online *Directory of Fellowships in Health Services Administration* is a compilation of postgraduate fellowships for which students and early careerists may apply; this directory also provides a place for sponsoring organizations to promote their fellowships and increase their visibility. If you have questions about creating a fellowship, please refer to the information below.

1) What is a postgraduate fellowship?

A fellowship is a preceptor-directed program designed to nurture independence and learning by measurement and evaluation of progress toward defined developmental objectives. It provides practical learning in a healthcare organization beyond graduate-level academic instruction. These usually last one to two years. Some fellowships are general, while others specialize in multi-hospital systems, academic medical centers, corporate administration, health insurance or group practice management. While the sponsoring organization may offer the fellow continuing permanent employment, it is not required to, nor is the fellow obliged to accept such an offer.

2) What is the role of the preceptor?

The preceptor is a coach in a formal educational relationship with the fellow who coordinates and structures the learning process and provides appropriate resources. The effective preceptor will create an action plan that includes in-depth orientation, delineates required skills, provides periodic performance appraisals, and specifies a day-to-day supervisory and subordinate relationship. In addition, the plan should incorporate participation in continuing education and seminars, further academic preparation and general dialogue about professional and career development. The preceptor should instill a positive attitude about risks to assist the fellow throughout his/her career.

3) What is the role of the fellow?

He/she must understand his/her role and contribute in ways defined by the preceptor. This role involves developing as a team member and becoming socialized into the profession and the institution through feedback from the management team.

As a fellow, the new careerist is dependent upon the expertise of others. Interpersonal skills are essential; he/she must follow directions, learn the organization and its idiosyncrasies, develop supervisory skills as delegated by the preceptor, complete the learning process and assume tasks. Specific tasks are a major portion of the fellowship such as solution of management problems, analysis of specific policy issues, short and long-term leadership roles and completion of organizational projects. The individual must be willing to learn from those with more experience, yet be courageous enough to contribute and take calculated risks. The individual learns to manage fear of failure as mistakes are often the best teachers.

4) Are there recommended organizational procedures a company should follow when creating a fellowship?

Ideally, the application due date to the sponsoring organization should be six months before the fellow's start date. The selected applicant is often announced within 60 days after the application due date so applicants who are not chosen can then concentrate their efforts elsewhere. A start date should be negotiated between the selected applicant and the sponsor.

5) What information should a company request from an applicant?

A statement of interest explaining the applicant's qualifications and objectives for the fellowship and how the experience will advance his/her career, a current resume, copies of undergraduate transcripts and the

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most recent graduate school transcripts, a letter of recommendation from his/her program director and at least one professional recommendation.

6) If I add my organization's fellowship position to ACHE's directory, what information should I include?

- Your organization's name and contact information specific to the fellowship
- The program title, description of the program and number of positions
- Applicant qualifications
- The length of the position
- The application deadline and selection announcement date

7) What are some examples of fellowship models?

- **Operations generalist:** The fellow uses analytical problem-solving and leadership skills in the healthcare organization's major departments, such as surgery, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics, nursing, social service, pharmacy, etc.
- **Financial management specialist:** The fellow concentrates on financial analysis, accounting, capital and departmental budgeting and auditing. Some projects are overseen by generalists with an emphasis on knowledge and skills developed in university graduate programs.
- **Marketing and program planning specialist:** The fellow works on market research projects and tasks, planning and promotion; interpretation of patient/customer/physician attitudes and values; assessment and testing of programs in clinical, operational, financial, ethical, medical and legal areas. The fellow may work in high technology equipment areas, medical programs such as organ transplantation, burn centers and sports medicine or even community-based services, such as home healthcare and hospice programs.

8) What are common characteristics of effective fellowships?

1. They are well-planned, with enough flexibility to allow the fellow to develop his/her own learning opportunities consistent with his/her needs and that of the organization.
2. They include a high degree of preceptorial involvement by one or more individuals.
3. They offer a number of ways that the fellow can take part in active, hands-on, substantive projects that foster development of verbal, interpersonal and analytical skills. The fellowship should emphasize active involvement. Exposure to management decision-making processes and board of trustee activities, while often passive, is also important and integral to the fellowship.
4. The fellow should be able to observe effective leadership and develop leadership skills.
5. The fellow learns to work independently, as his/her management skills grow and develop.
6. The fellow is treated as a professional and colleague, not as a student or intern.
7. The fellow is able to integrate healthcare management theory and application.
8. The fellowships offer maximum and effective use of the fellow's time.
9. They include measurable growth and development of the fellow with periodic evaluation sessions based on predetermined criteria that should be determined early in the fellowship program.
10. They include timely, candid, and outcome-oriented evaluations by the preceptor and other seasoned leaders in the organization.

2006 ACHE Postgraduate Fellowship Compensation Survey findings (151 respondents):

- Median income - \$43,604
- Median work hours per week – 53 hours
- 68% of respondents had a one year fellowship
- Half of the respondents were hired expecting to continue employment after completing the fellowship

If your organization will be offering a fellowship that starts in the coming year, let us know. If you know of any other fellowships offered in your area, please encourage those organizations to submit their listings. If you have any questions, please contact Michael J. Chynoweth, membership operations specialist, Division of Membership, at (312) 424-9392 or mchynoweth@ache.org.