



# Health Administration (M.H.A.)

## Career Description

- Healthcare administrators impact the lives of many people by providing health planning services, policy formation and analysis, organizational structure, and asset and risk management.
- Careers in this field require professionalism, leadership skills, and an understanding of the complexities of healthcare delivery with its specialized language, financial structure, and politics.
- Career opportunities include hospital and health system management, medical group administration, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, care management organizations, health information technology firms, supply chain companies, government/policy organizations, health insurers, and consulting.

## Becoming a Healthcare Administrator

- To enter this field you should have strong written and oral communication skills; the ability to develop and present reports; the talent to work well with others; honest and ethical conduct; and significant leadership skills including tact, diplomacy, and flexibility.
- Some positions entry-level positions only require a bachelor's degree in health administration.
- A master's degree is required for most higher level positions in healthcare administration. Essentially three degree pathways are common among students who want to pursue a position in health administration. These programs differ in name, but also in their curriculum. Look for accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME).
  - A Master of Public Health (MPH) degree with a specialization in health management or policy is one possibility. The central focus

of an MPH is on the description of patterns of disease and on the development, operation, financing, and evaluation of population-based programs and the links between community and health.

- A Master of Business Administration (MBA) is another possibility. An MBA develops students' business management knowledge with an emphasis on accounting, corporate finance, and international business. Generally, however, only a few classes are available in healthcare management.
- A Master of Health Administration (MHA) focuses on the business and policy needs specific to healthcare settings. These programs incorporate the best features of all the programs. A variation on this type of program is the Master of Health Services Administration (MHSA).
- Some schools also offer combined programs such as an MPH/MBA or MHA/JD (law degree) or MD/MBA.

## Prerequisite courses

- Required undergraduate coursework varies considerably between programs.
- Most programs have few requirements as they are seeking an academically diverse class.
- Generally a broad background is useful including accounting, micro and macroeconomics, statistics, ethics, social sciences (especially courses on diversity), communications classes, political science, public policy, and psychology (both introductory and health psychology).
- Solid oral and written communication skills are necessary.

## Job Outlook

- Since the healthcare industry is the largest in the United States and one of the largest employers, jobs in the healthcare sector continue to grow faster than most other segments.
- Unlike many traditional management programs, graduates of healthcare management programs can find opportunities in rural communities and metropolitan areas throughout the world.
- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, medical and health services managers earned an average salary of \$94,500 in 2015. Senior healthcare executives with more experience can earn \$200,000 or more.

## Preparation

- Observation of healthcare management professionals is a good idea.
- Develop a record of interest in healthcare issues.
- Most programs will require the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) or the Graduate Management Aptitude Test (GMAT).
- A TOEFL exam for those whose first language is not English may be required.
- While at Purdue, consider working toward a Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Innovation through the Burton D. Morgan Center for Entrepreneurship. Another option is to take part in some of the interdisciplinary applied projects in healthcare through the EPICS program. Also, watch for conferences through the Regenstrief Center for Healthcare Engineering as well.
  - [Entrepreneurship](https://www.purdue.edu/entr/) <https://www.purdue.edu/entr/>
  - [EPICS](https://engineering.purdue.edu/EPICS) <https://engineering.purdue.edu/EPICS>
  - [Regenstrief](http://www.purdue.edu/discoverypark/rche/) <http://www.purdue.edu/discoverypark/rche/>

## Applying

- Some Health Administration programs accept applications through HAMPCAS (the Healthcare Administration, Management & Policy Centralized Application Service).
- Other programs will require applying directly to their program.

## Fee Assistance

- Visit specific school websites to learn if fee assistance is offered.

## More Information

- [Association of University Programs in Health Administration](http://www.aupha.org/home) <http://www.aupha.org/home>
- [American College of Health Care Administrators](http://achca.org) <http://achca.org>
- [American College of Healthcare Executives](http://ache.org) <http://ache.org>
- [ACHE's Healthcare Management Careers](http://www.healthmanagementcareers.org) <http://www.healthmanagementcareers.org>
- [HAMPCAS](http://www.hampcas.org/home#.WAqJWPkrKYO) <http://www.hampcas.org/home#.WAqJWPkrKYO>

## Programs in the Region

- [IUPUI MHA](http://www.pbhealth.iupui.edu/index.php/prospective-students/master/mha/) Indianapolis, IN <http://www.pbhealth.iupui.edu/index.php/prospective-students/master/mha/>
- [Northwestern MS in Healthcare Quality & Patient Safety](http://www.feinberg.northwestern.edu/sites/cehs/masters-programs/healthcare-quality-patient-safety/index.html) Chicago, IL <http://www.feinberg.northwestern.edu/sites/cehs/masters-programs/healthcare-quality-patient-safety/index.html>
- [University of Michigan Master of Health Services Administration](https://sph.umich.edu/hmp/programs/mhsa.html) Ann Arbor, MI <https://sph.umich.edu/hmp/programs/mhsa.html>
- [University of Memphis MHA](http://www.memphis.edu/sph/programs/index.php) Memphis, TN <http://www.memphis.edu/sph/programs/index.php>
- [Rush University MS in Health System Management](https://www.rushu.rush.edu/college-health-sciences/academic-programs/master-science-health-systems-management) Chicago, IL <https://www.rushu.rush.edu/college-health-sciences/academic-programs/master-science-health-systems-management>

Information for this career guide came from the above websites, United States [Bureau of Labor Statistics](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/medical-and-health-services-managers.htm) at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/medical-and-health-services-managers.htm> and those of individual schools.