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I. Introduction

Post-graduate administrative fellowships typically involve one to two year roles taken by recent graduates from master’s level programs (e.g., MHA, MHP, MPH, MPP, MBA, or equivalent degrees), and prepare early careerists for leadership-track careers in the health sector. Fellowships are a critical stepping stone for many early professionals who will ultimately aspire to senior leadership roles. Fellowships emphasize structured learning and leadership development in addition to completion of work. Fellows are expected to engage in projects that embody and strengthen the mission, vision, and culture of the organization.

Fellowship Site, or institutions that provide an administrative fellowship, have an increased reputation to the field because they place an emphasis on the proactive growth and development of their leadership pool. The rotational and project-based structure provides the organization with an opportunity develop their fellows’ professional skillset early on, which adds to their overall potential for success and meaningful contribution to the organization’s mission and vision. During the program, fellows contribute to the organization through specific assignments, responsibilities, and deliverables. Lastly, the meaningful mentor/mentee relationships fill both parties with a sense of purpose.
II. About the National Council on Administrative Fellowships (NCAF)

The National Council on Administrative Fellowships (NCAF) is an organization of fellowship programs and graduate health management programs who are working collaboratively to advance the role, availability, and quality of administrative fellowships and to create a uniform, coordinated, and fair approach to the fellowship application process. The expectations for applicants, graduate program directors, and administrative fellowships are spelled out in a NCAF member-developed Code of Good Practice. In the code, members agree to abide by the following dates:

- A uniform **application deadline**: First Monday in October
- A uniform **initial offer date**: Second Monday in November
- A 24-hour **decision window** for students

Administrative fellowship sites participating in NCAF receive the following benefits:

- Sharing of best practices and networking with other NCAF members
- Increased national visibility through NCAF’s online directory, marketing, and outreach
- Participation in an ongoing national dialog about continuously improving fellowship opportunities
- Participation in the National Administrative Fellowship Centralized Application System (NAFCAS)
  - A robust centralized site to accept and track applications, download and analyze applicant data, and streamline administrative functions such as application reviews and interviews
  - A clear, organized, searchable online site for students to learn about NCAF fellowship programs
- Recognition from NCAF-member graduate programs, who are encouraged to consider NCAF administrative fellowship programs when recommending fellowship sites to students
- Contribution to data collection, benchmarking, and reporting activities allowing for comparison to national benchmarks and opportunities for continuous quality improvement
- Participation in quarterly webinars and other learning events for NCAF fellows
- Participation in a “second round” clearinghouse, as desired, designed to assist fellowship sites and students in filling open positions after the nationally coordinated offer period
- Setting priorities for future directions of NCAF, including:
  - Continuously evolving the *Code of Good Practice*
  - Growing NCAF’s membership and support
  - Expanding NCAF member learning and sharing opportunities
  - Prioritizing NCAF’s data collection and benchmarking research efforts
III. About Administrative Fellowship Programs

What is the purpose of the fellowship?
Administrative fellowships are coveted opportunities for early careerists in healthcare management that serve as real-world exposure to the major areas of the organization to develop their leadership, critical-thinking, and problem-solving skills.

Who is in charge of the administrative fellowship?
Hospitals/health systems typically have one or more of the following individuals in charge of their administrative fellowship: executive sponsor, program director, program coordinator, and/or preceptor. Roles of the leader(s) are varied at all fellowship sites and can be molded according to your organization’s needs. See Table 1 for descriptions of these roles.

What is the role of the organizational leaders?
The role of the organizational leaders is to provide a mentoring relationship with the fellow. The leader should engage in discussions with the fellows regarding his/her views on leadership philosophy and techniques. The executive sponsor or preceptor of the fellowship is generally an executive of the hospital/health system. The program director/coordinator may include a representative from human resources, the second-year fellow (if applicable), the past administrative fellow(s), and/or an individual that would like to be involved in overseeing the program as a whole. This role is a helpful addition for large fellowship programs. The organization leaders should act as a role model. Frequently evaluate yourself (the preceptor/mentor) on how good of a role model you are being.

What is the role of the administrative fellow?
The fellow is given a lot of responsibility through their projects and activities and should be expected to perform as a professional. Also, the fellow should be expected to deliver quality work and abide by the mission and vision of the organization.

Table 1. Leadership Roles & Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Position</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Sponsor/ Preceptor</td>
<td>- Schedule progress meetings to discuss fellow’s projects and experience</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Ongoing mentorship and formal performance reviews</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Oversee administrative fellowship budget and authorize all fellowship expenditures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Source career development opportunities (conferences, leadership workshops, second year placement in organizational priority areas)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Remain heavily involved in administrative fellowship recruiting</td>
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<td>- Manage the fellow’s relationship with rotation preceptors (if applicable)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Facilitate greater understanding of the healthcare organization by connecting the fellow to key meetings and team members</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Provide input on project selection and execution for the application of knowledge gained in the fellow’s graduate program</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Assure providers and staff support the fellow being on-site as a “new learner” observing and working in areas of clinical and clerical operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Debrief the resident after meetings and professional encounters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title/Position</td>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Program Director/Coordinator | - Work with the administrative fellow to plan and execute action items identified through NCAF  
- Assist the administrative fellow in planning, recruiting, interviewing, hiring, and onboarding process for the administrative fellowship  
- Assess the fellow’s needs to create and maintain strategic pipelines of talent and implement additional development opportunities as aligned with organizational initiatives  
- Foster a learning environment that supports the development and accomplishments of direct reports  
- Coordinate site placements (if necessary), course scheduling, and networking opportunities for fellows  
- Coach, identify strengths, opportunities for growth and resources to create individualized professional development plans |
| Administrative Fellow   | - Take initiative in designing or implementing a project or assignments as needs arise during the fellowship  
- Attend all scheduled meetings (i.e., board meetings, senior management team meetings, department or medical staff meetings)  
- Provide professional quality work  
- Seek guidance when needed  
- Comply with the policies and procedures of the organization  
- Help coordinate the planning, recruiting, interviewing, hiring, and onboarding for the next fellow |
IV. Administrative Fellowship Structure

Choosing the executive sponsor(s)/preceptor(s)
The executive sponsor can remain the same individual each year or rotate based on interest. This individual is typically the CEO, COO, or senior vice president. Participation in the fellowship can be assigned or be voluntary. This can be reevaluated each year by informing the senior leaders at the organization of the opportunity and assessing their interest/availability to host a fellow. If it is the individual’s first time hosting a fellow, the fellowship program director/coordinator should confirm responsibilities and expectations of the preceptor. Sites can choose the ratio of preceptors to fellows they would like to provide.

Length of fellowship
The length of the fellowship usually lasts between 12-24 months. This time-frame allows the fellow(s) ample time to rotate throughout the hospital/health system and to experience different parts of the organization. When considering the length of the fellowship your organization would like to offer, there are different benefits and disadvantages to each of the time-frames.

12-month fellowship
With a 12-month fellowship, fellows are able to enter a permanent role within the organization more quickly. This time-frame provides the perfect amount of time to understand the organizations values and to find an area of interest for pursuing a long-term position. Also, a 12-month fellowship forces the fellows to deliver projects sooner than if the fellowship program was longer. However, a shorter fellowship program may not provide fellows with ample time to find a position post-fellowship. Also, for larger health systems, the fellow may not have the necessary amount of time to rotate throughout all parts of the organization.

18-month fellowship
18-month fellowships allow for an overlap between fellows year-to-year. The benefits of this time-frame are that it allows for more in-depth onboarding and transition time for the fellows. Also, the fellow is provided more time for project completion.

24-month fellowship
A 24-month fellowship provides the time necessary to fully embrace a large multi-hospital system. This time-frame provides the fellow with more time for shadowing, learning, and building a strong network. Benefits of a longer program include allowing the fellows to accomplish more projects and to experiment with different functional roles and subject matter. For fellowships that offer a two-year fellowship annually, the fellow in their second year will be able to serve as a resource for the new fellow. However, a longer fellowship program is an increased up-front cost to the organization and fellows may not want to commit to the position for this length of time.

Number of fellows
The number of fellows in each program varies. This can be due to the costs allocated to the fellowship, the size of the organization, and the ability to provide a meaningful mentoring relationship to each fellow. Most fellowship sites accept one to five fellows annually. Alternatively, some NCAF fellowship sites accept up to 20 fellows within multiple regions and sites.

Projects versus Rotations
Fellowships can be structured to be project-based, rotation-based, or a combination of projects and rotations. Some 24-month fellowship programs will focus the first year on rotations and the second year on projects. More information can be found under Section X (During the Fellowship).

Fellow feedback and evaluations
Evaluations are held at various times, dependent on the length of the fellowship. For some fellowships, the fellow is evaluated after each rotation, while others have bi-monthly or monthly performance reviews. Longer
fellowships may have 90-day evaluations. You may want to use leadership competencies to do this assessment. Please refer to NCHL leadership competencies in Table 3 for an in depth look.

Fellows are often able to evaluate the fellowship program as well. Table 2 and 3 below provide sample questions that can be adopted to improve your organization’s fellowship process.

**Table 2: Fellowship Site Evaluation Questions**
On a scale of one (1) to five (5), with one (1) being strongly disagree and five (5) being strongly agreed, please state if our fellowship does the following:

| Provides opportunities to use skills developed in your graduate degree program | (1) Strongly Disagree | (2) Disagree | (3) Undecided | (4) Agree | (5) Strongly Agree |
| Provides opportunities to work with high-level executives and insight on the decision-making process within the organization | | | | | |
| Provides opportunities to all levels of the healthcare organization | | | | | |
| Provides opportunities to engage with multiple departments in a meaningful way | | | | | |
| Provides opportunities to take initiative and ownership to create and/or improve processes or programs | | | | | |
| Provides opportunities to work on and complete well-structured assignments and/or projects | | | | | |

**Table 3: Fellowship Site Evaluation Questions | Open-Ended Questions**

- How would you describe your overall fellowship experience?
- Would you recommend this fellowship? Why or why not?
- Did your fellowship meet your expectations? Why or why not?
- Do you have recommendations for how the organization or your preceptor could improve the fellowship experience in the future?

**Fellow salary and benefits**
Fellowship sites typically offer a competitive base salary with full benefits and consider their fellows as full-time career employees. Some fellowship sites offer relocation benefits based on relocation distance.

From the most recent American College of Healthcare Executives compensation survey, the annual base compensation for administrative fellows ranges from approximately $40,000 to $80,000, with the median being $56,600.
V. Application Process

Marketing the fellowship availability
Fellowship sites generally have a posting of their fellowship opening on their organization’s website. This posting could include a fellowship overview, information on the preceptor(s) and current/past fellows, and potential projects. NCAF members receive additional marketing benefits, such as: listing on the administrative fellowship directory, posting on NAFCAS (if applicable), NCAF member list distribution, attendance at the annual NCAF graduate student reception, etc.

Choosing an application deadline
Fellowship sites should adhere to the uniform application deadline, which is designed to allow fellowship applicants an adequate opportunity to clarify their post-graduate career interests. NCAF’s uniform application deadline is the first Monday of October.

Accepted application methods
Applications are accepted in various methods at each fellowship site. The centralized application service (NAFCAS) is provided to NCAF fellowship site members for accepting applications. Applications may also be accepted by mail or electronically.

National Administrative Fellowship Centralized Application Service (NAFCAS)
The National Administrative Fellowship Centralized Application Service (NAFCAS) is one of the available methods for fellowship sites to accept applications. NAFCAS allows NCAF administrative fellowship sites to collect and manage applications more easily, while providing a simplified and streamlined application process for applicants. The platform will also allow NCAF to readily compile aggregate data for benchmarking purposes. At this time, about 90% of NCAF fellowship sites utilize NAFCAS for application collection.

Traditional methods (mail, electronic, etc.)
Fellowship sites may accept applications by sending a package, electronically sending the materials, or by completing an application via an online job listing.

Required application materials
Although application requirements vary at each fellowship site, the following are frequently required:

Letters of recommendation
Letters of recommendation are a vital part of the application materials. Through the centralized application service (NAFCAS), applicants are required the following: (1) ACADEMIC, (1) PROFESSIONAL, and (1) OTHER (academic, professional, or letter from students’ program director). Some programs may request a personal letter of recommendation in addition to the three letters listed above.

Transcript(s)
Majority of fellowship sites require an official graduate school transcript for application materials. A few fellowship sites require an unofficial undergraduate transcript in addition to the official graduate school transcript that is required by the centralized application service (NAFCAS).

Cover letter
A one-page cover letter is often required of the applicants to highlight their strengths and showcase their writing ability.

Resume
A resume is always required of applicants to list past professional experiences.

Personal statement/Essay
A personal statement or essay is frequently required from sites for the applicants to express their reason for pursuing the fellowship and interest in the healthcare field. This requirement is usually 1-2 pages in length.

**Application reviewer(s)**

Fellowship sites vary on the individuals they include for application review. The current fellow and the fellowship coordinator/director are typically the main contact. Recruiters from human resources may also be involved.
VI. Interview Process

Number and type of interview(s)

The number of applicants interviewed should be determined based on the number of fellowship positions you plan to hire. Usually two to three rounds of interviews are completed. Interviews can be via the telephone or virtual and on-site.

Figure 1 below illustrates what fellowship sites have shared with us regarding their recruitment process. For example, fellowship sites will conduct a phone or virtual interview with their highest ranked candidates amounting to approximately six times the number of fellows they wish to interview. From the advancing candidate pool, they will invite approximately four to six times the number of candidates per available fellowship position for onsite interviews (N=Number of fellowship positions).

Telephone

Telephone interviews are typically the first stage of the interview process. This interview allows the fellowship site to learn more about the applicant and discuss their application and background in more detail. The phone screening can be used to clarify information identified in the application and to gain additional insight on the applicant.

Virtual

Virtual interviews can be in addition to or in place of telephone interviews. Virtual interviews allow fellowship sites to view professional mannerisms of the applicants.

On-site: individual versus panel

The on-site interview should be the final stage of the interviewing process. During this time, applicants should meet with all senior leaders involved in the fellowship program, the program director/coordinator, and the current fellow (if applicable.) This interview should help the fellowship site understand each applicant’s interest and goals and compare to that of the organization. Some fellowship sites interview the applicant with a panel of leaders and others prefer to interview the applicant on an individual basis.

Figure 1. Interview Structure

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1 Data was derived from NCAF’s annual benchmarking survey. Survey data is collected through applicants who applied during the 2017-2018 cycle for a fellowship position in 2018.
Date(s) and length(s) of interview(s)
Interviews should be held between the uniform application deadline and the initial offer date. The length of telephone and virtual interviews are typically an hour. On-site interviews may include individual and group panels and may last six to eight hours, and may be preceded by dinner the night before.

Travel and Expenses
Most fellowships cover transportation, lodging, and meals for onsite interviews. Approximately half of the sites do not pay for these costs upfront, but instead reimburse the student after the interview. It is at your institution’s discretion to determine these procedures.
VII. Choosing a Fellow that is Right for Your Organization

Selection criteria
Fellowship sites typically recruit applicants holding graduate degrees in health care administration, business administration, mission services, ethics, and other related fields. Many administrative fellowship sites require applicants to graduate from an accredited program, including accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation in Healthcare Administration (CAHME). Previous relevant work experience may be desirable.

Competencies
Many organizations focus on specific leadership competencies to design their fellowship experience. Please see Table 2 below for an example of the competencies in the National Center for Healthcare Leadership’s model.

Table 2. NCHL Leadership Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION COMPETENCY DOMAINS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BOUNDARY SPANNING</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Optimizing relationships between a leader’s span of control and the departments, organizations, communities and/or broader networks within which it operates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Collaboration</strong> - The ability to align one’s own and the organization’s priorities with the needs and values of the community, including its cultural and ethnocentric values, and to move health forward in line with population-based wellness needs and national health agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational Awareness</strong> - The ability to understand and learn the formal and informal decision-making structures and power relationships in an organization or industry (e.g., stakeholders, suppliers). This includes the ability to identify who the real decision makers are and the individuals who can influence them, and to predict how new events will affect individuals and groups within the organization.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship &amp; Network Development</strong> - The ability to establish, build, and sustain professional contacts for the purpose of building networks of people with similar goals and that support similar interests.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EXECUTION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translating vision and strategy into actions supporting optimal organizational performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Accountability</strong> - The ability to hold people accountable to standards of performance or ensure compliance by effectively and appropriately using the power of one’s position or personality, with the long-term good of the organization in mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Achievement Orientation</strong> - A concern for surpassing standards of excellence. Standards may involve past performance (striving for improvement); objective measures (results orientation); outperforming others (competitiveness); challenging goals, or redefining the nature of the standards themselves (innovation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analytical Thinking</strong> - Developing a deeper understanding of a situation, issue, or problem by breaking it down or tracing its implications step-by-step. It includes organizing the parts of a situation, issue, or problem systematically; making systematic comparisons of different features or aspects; setting priorities on a rational basis; and identifying time sequences, causal relationships, or if-then relationships.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Skills 1 – Writing</strong> - The ability to use written communications in formal and informal situations to convey meaning, build shared understanding, and productively move agendas forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Skills 2 – Speaking &amp; Facilitating</strong> - The ability to use spoken communications in formal and informal situations to convey meaning, build shared understanding, and productively move agendas forward.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Initiative</strong> - Identifying a problem, obstacle, or opportunity and taking action in light of this identification to address current or future problems or opportunities. Initiative emphasizes proactively doing things and not simply thinking about future actions. Levels of proficiency relate to the time scale of focus, moving from addressing current situations to acting on long-term future opportunities or problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Performance Measurement</strong> - The ability to understand and use statistical and financial metrics and methods to set goals and measure clinical as well as organizational performance; commits to and deploys evidence-based techniques.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Process &amp; Quality Improvement</strong> - The ability to analyze and design or improve an organizational process, including incorporating the principles of high reliability, continuous quality improvement, and user-centered design.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Management</strong> - The ability to plan, execute, and oversee a multi-year, large-scale project involving significant resources, scope, and impact. Examples include the construction of a major building, implementation of a new enterprise-wide information system, development of a new service line.</td>
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**RELATIONS**
Leading, through example and actions, to create an organizational climate that values employees from all backgrounds, provides a healthy and energizing environment in which to work, and encourages everyone’s ongoing development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Collaboration</strong></th>
<th>The ability to work cooperatively and inclusively with other individuals and/or teams they do not formally lead; working together, as opposed to working separately or competitively.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact &amp; Influence</strong></td>
<td>The ability to persuade, convince, influence, or impress others (individuals or groups) in order to get them to go along with or to support one’s opinion or position. The “key” is understanding others’ interests and motivations, in order to have a specific impact, effect, or impression on them and/or convince them to take a specific course of action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal Understanding</strong></td>
<td>The ability to accurately hear and understand the unspoken or partly expressed thoughts, feelings, and concerns of others, especially those who may represent diverse backgrounds and very different world-views. Levels of proficiency relate to the increasing complexity and depth of understanding, as well as openness to perspectives very different from one’s own.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Talent Development</strong></td>
<td>The ability to build the breadth and depth of the organization’s human capability and professionalism, including supporting top-performing people and taking a personal interest in coaching and mentoring high-potential leaders.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Team Leadership</strong></td>
<td>The ability to lead groups of people toward shared visions and goals, from forming a team that possesses balanced capabilities, to setting its mission, values, and norms, and holding team members accountable individually and as a group for results.</td>
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**TRANSFORMATION**
Creating and implementing compelling and inclusive change processes in support of improving health quality, efficiency, and access.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Change Leadership</strong></th>
<th>The ability to energize stakeholders and sustain their commitment to changes in approaches, processes, and strategies.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information Seeking</strong></td>
<td>An underlying curiosity and desire to know more about things, people, and issues, including the desire for knowledge and staying current with health, organizational, industry, and professional trends and developments. It includes pressing for more precise information; resolving discrepancies by asking a series of questions; and scanning for potential opportunities or information that may be of future use, as well as staying current and seeking best practices for adoption.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Innovation</strong></td>
<td>The ability to approach their work and the organization in new and breakthrough ways, including applying complex concepts, developing creative new solutions, or adapting previous solutions in promising new ways.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Orientation</strong></td>
<td>The ability to consider the business, demographic, ethno-cultural, political, and regulatory implications of decisions and develop strategies that continually improve the long-term success and viability of the organization.</td>
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**VALUES**
Creating and implementing compelling and inclusive change processes in support of improving health quality, efficiency, and access.

| **Professional & Social Responsibility** | The demonstration of ethics, sound professional practices, social accountability, and community stewardship. Acting in ways that are consistent with one’s values and what one says is important. |

**HEALTH SYSTEMS & BUSINESS LITERACY**
Understanding the health system’s current business and operating frameworks as well as the dynamic context within which they operate (e.g., community, competitive, HR, financial, legal, policy, and environmental).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Financial Skills</strong></th>
<th>The ability to understand and explain financial and accounting information, prepare and manage budgets, and make sound long-term investment decisions.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Human Resource Management</strong></td>
<td>The ability to implement staff development and other management practices that represent contemporary best practices, comply with legal and regulatory requirements, and optimize the performance of the workforce, including performance assessments, alternative compensation and benefit methods, and the alignment of human resource practices and processes to meet the strategic goals of the organization.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Information Technology Management</strong></td>
<td>The ability to see the potential for administrative and clinical technologies to support process and performance improvement. Actively sponsors the continuous seeking of enhanced technological capabilities.</td>
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## SELF-AWARENESS & SELF-DEVELOPMENT

*Ongoing habits and actions taken to continuously improve self-knowledge, interpersonal effectiveness, and well-being.*

**Self-Awareness** - The ability to have an accurate view of one’s own strengths and development needs, including the impact that one has on others. A willingness to address development needs through reflective, self-directed learning, and by trying new approaches.

**Self-Confidence** - A belief in one’s own capability to successfully accomplish their work. This includes confidence in one’s ability as expressed in increasingly challenging circumstances, and confidence in one’s decisions or opinions.

**Well-Being** - Establishes habits supporting well-being, and creates a work climate supportive of the total health of oneself and others. This includes role-modeling healthy habits and practices, and monitoring internal and external environments for opportunities to improve health.
VIII. Offer Process

Making an offer
There is a six-week period between the application deadline and the offer date. In order to provide students with adequate time for the interview process and to investigate and interview at sites that are most aligned with their career goals, fellowship sites should adhere to the NCAF uniform offer date of the second Monday in November.

Negotiating salaries and benefits
Salaries and benefits for the fellows are usually predetermined and non-negotiable. Fellows should be treated as full-time employees and receive benefits as such.

Acceptance window for applicants
Fellowship sites should comply with the uniform offer acceptance time period of no less than 24 hours from time of the offer.

Start date
Although there is variation on start dates, most programs begin between June and August.
IX. Onboarding

Fellow orientation
Orientation should mimic the full-time employee orientation currently in place at your institution. This should include, but not be limited to, learning about your organization’s mission and vision, policies, culture, employee benefits, administrative requirements, etc.

In addition to the standard orientation procedures, fellows should be introduced to the senior executives, board of directors, and any special committees that the fellow may be involved in.

Furthermore, fellows should be provided with their expectations and set goals and schedule standard check-in meetings with their preceptor and executive sponsor for the entirety of the fellowship.
Administrative fellows participate in a range of opportunities and activities that might not be normally available to an early-careerist. For example, fellows are often given the opportunity to attend or participate in:

- Board meetings
- Executive shadowing
- Senior leadership meetings
- Committee meetings
- Administrator on-call rotations

They may also be asked to complete suggested readings and maintain a journal of their experience to be used with in conversations with their preceptor or executive sponsor. Similar to other employees, fellows participate in quarterly and annual performance reviews, but may receive more frequent feedback to enhance their leadership development.

In addition fellows may participate in assessments, such as 360-degree feedback, DiSC, or other leadership assessments. Preparing an Individual Leadership Development Plan at the beginning of the fellowship can help with tracking progress over the course of the fellowship.

**Fellowship project(s)**
Fellows should have the opportunity to manage various substantial projects throughout their term. Projects allow fellows to develop their leadership and project management skills, while pursuing the mission and vision of the organization.

Projects should include mentorship, goal setting, and evaluations for effective development.

**Projects may include:**
- Budgeting process
- Business development for international program(s) or new service lines
- Capital improvement project
- Community/population health improvement initiative
- Employee wellness program
- Human resources and IT conversion
- Marketing campaigns
- Hospital operations restructuring
- Patient satisfaction initiative
- Quality and patient safety project
- Recruitment and onboarding of new fellows

**Fellowship rotation(s)**
Fellowship rotations vary across sites due to factors such as the size of the organization or the length of the fellowship, typically ranging anywhere from one to six months. The expectations of the rotations are to gain exposure to the people and areas of responsibilities; work on short-term and long-term projects (as determined by fellow and rotation leader); and develop skills such as relationship management, presentations/public speaking, and more technically oriented tasks.

Some fellowships are not rotation based or do not have set rotations each year. It may be up to the fellow’s discretion, with guidance from their executive sponsor or the CEO, to decide what they want to be involved in. Prior to beginning each rotation, learning objectives should be set in place and provided to the fellow(s).
Rotations may include:
- Accounting/Finance
- Business Development
- Clinic/Outpatient Services
- Community Outreach/Population Health
- Executive Leadership
- Facilities Management
- Governance
- Marketing
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Operations
- Philanthropy
- Research Administrations (i.e., clinical trials)
- Service Line Administration
- System Integration
XI. Beyond the Fellowship Experience

Conferences and meetings
The fellows should be provided with the opportunity to attend meaningful national and regional healthcare conferences. Most fellows are provided a stipend of approximately $1,000-$4,000 during their fellowship to be allocated to conference attendance, professional membership, Six Sigma/Lean training, internal university courses, and/or certifications.

- American College of Healthcare Executives Leadership Congress (March)
- National Council on Administrative Fellowships Member Meeting (March)
- American Hospital Association Annual Meeting (spring)
- Health Forum Leadership Summit (July)
- Association of American Medical Colleges’ Council of Teaching Hospitals, COTH (September)
- National Center for Healthcare Leadership Human Capital Investment Conference (November)
- Institute for Healthcare Improvement National Forum (December)
- State Hospital Association meetings (varies)

Fellow exchange
A Fellow Exchange is a learning opportunity where administrative fellow(s) from one site or multiple sites (Sponsor) visit another fellowship site (Host) to experience and learn firsthand about the organization. These exchanges are often planned and coordinated by the Host organization’s fellows. Although not required, the exchange is often reciprocated within a pre-determined timeframe.

The Fellow Exchange provides a unique experience for administrative fellow(s) to encounter the inner workings of another health system and/or hospital—operations, financing, strategy, centers of excellence, regional differences (rural versus urban), etc.

NCAF Opportunities
NCAF offers fellows several opportunities during their fellowship. They may choose to participate on an NCAF subcommittee which provides them exposure to a national initiative and an opportunity to work with leaders and fellows from across the county.

In addition, NCAF hosts 60-minute quarterly leadership webinars, which serve as a virtual educational session for current NCAF fellows. Topics have included Innovating in Healthcare, Navigating the Professional Terrain, The US Election & the Impact on Healthcare, Building a Strong Professional Network, etc.
XII. After the Fellowship

Hire for internal positions
Near completion of the fellowship, the organizational leaders should assist the fellow with reviewing possibilities for future positions. Leaders should identify open positions at the organization and compare availability with the fellow’s interests.

It is common for fellows at a 24-month fellowship position to complete a program manager rotation at the end of their fellowship. If the fellow would like to pursue the role long-term, the fellow may rotate out of their fellowship a few months earlier than expected to fill that position full time.

End of fellowship procedures
In order to continue to improve your fellowship program, be sure to evaluate the fellow on their experiences. Fellows should be provided an evaluation to recognize the potential strengths and weaknesses of the fellowship program.

Additionally, NCAF conducts an annual benchmarking survey of current fellow, usually in late spring, to better understand the fellowship experience across the country. Findings from this survey are available to NCAF members.

One of the last things that fellows should aid in is the transfer of roles and responsibilities from the current fellow to the incoming fellow. This can include a brief introduction to NCAF as well any other parties your fellow may be working with both in and outside your organization.
References


For questions, please contact NCAF at ncaf@nchl.org.