2027 NCAF and LENS Member FAQ

Membership pathways for graduate programs and administrative fellowship sites

Beginning in 2027, the National Council on Administrative Fellowships (NCAF) becomes a named community within NCHL's Leadership Excellence Networks (LENS). NCAF retains its fellowship focus while connecting members with broader leadership learning, academic partnerships and peer exchange.

2027 membership pathways

Identify your organization type and existing membership relationship. Investments below are annual organizational amounts for 2027.

COMMUNITY / STATUS	2027 INVESTMENT	WHAT IT MEANS
Existing NCAF graduate program Not currently in LENS	$2,000	Transitional Focus membership for 2027, including NCAF, reciprocal access to the Academia & Industry Collaborative, and eligible Focus benefits.
Graduate program Already in LENS	Individual review	Existing membership arrangements and community selections will be reviewed to confirm NCAF participation and the applicable investment.
New graduate program Entering NCAF outside the returning-member transition	$5,000	Standard Focus membership with NCAF selected, reciprocal access to the Academia & Industry Collaborative, and eligible Focus benefits.
Fellowship site Not currently in LENS	$5,000	Focus membership with NCAF selected, including NAFCAS platform access, fellowship programming and eligible Focus benefits.
Fellowship site Already in LENS	Individual review	NCAF participation depends on the selected membership level and communities. Prism includes the full LENS portfolio.
Organization seeking recruitment tools only	$1,750	NAFCAS Only is a separate recruitment subscription. It does not include LENS community membership.

Reciprocal Academia & Industry Collaborative access applies to academic graduate programs selecting NCAF. Healthcare-provider participation in that collaborative is available at Prism. Other community participation follows the prospectus eligibility requirements.

What continues

Is NCAF going away? No. NCAF retains its name, fellowship focus, peer relationships and commitment to administrative fellowship excellence.

Is NAFCAS being replaced? No. NAFCAS remains the fellowship application service. Platform access is included with NCAF community selection. Organizations seeking recruitment tools without membership may choose NAFCAS Only.

View the 2027 LENS Membership Prospectus

For graduate programs

NCAF continues to support fellowship pathways and peer learning. Reciprocal access to the Academia & Industry Collaborative connects academic expertise with healthcare organizations around applied learning, workforce readiness and leadership preparation.

1. Our existing NCAF graduate program is not currently in LENS. What changes in 2027?

Existing NCAF graduate programs are eligible for a $2,000 transitional Focus membership investment for 2027. This includes NCAF participation and reciprocal access to the Academia & Industry Collaborative, along with eligible Focus benefits. New graduate programs entering NCAF outside this transition follow the standard $5,000 Focus investment.

2. Our graduate program already belongs to LENS. Will we pay another NCAF membership fee?

Your current LENS and NCAF arrangements will be reviewed individually. NCAF participation may be included within your selected communities; any additional investment depends on your organization's arrangement. Our team will confirm the applicable 2027 membership level, community selections and investment with your primary representative.

3. What does the $2,000 transitional membership include?

It includes Focus membership with NCAF selected and reciprocal participation in the Academia & Industry Collaborative. Focus includes one in-person Leadership Excellence Summit registration and four Leadership Accelerator Summit virtual registrations, along with eligible member learning, peer connections and resources. Benchmarking reports are included with completion of the applicable survey. Fellowship fair participation follows the published program terms.

4. What is the Academia & Industry Collaborative, and why does it matter?

It connects academic leaders and healthcare industry partners around leadership preparation, applied learning and evolving workforce needs. Graduate programs can bring academic expertise into conversations with healthcare organizations and help inform how emerging leaders are prepared for practice.

5. Will our students benefit from this change?

The goal is to strengthen the connection between graduate education, fellowship recruitment and early-career leadership development. Student and early-career connections are available to graduate students, current administrative fellows and early careerists with up to five years of experience. Specific programs retain their eligibility, registration and capacity requirements.

6. Can our graduate program participate in other LENS communities or advisory work?

Additional community participation depends on member type, eligibility and the selected membership level. The transitional Focus pathway includes NCAF and reciprocal Academia & Industry Collaborative access, rather than the full portfolio. Academic members are eligible for workgroups and advisory groups at Focus level and above. Our team can help identify opportunities that fit your priorities.

View the 2027 LENS Membership Prospectus

For administrative fellowship sites

NCAF continues to support fellowship recruitment, peer exchange, learning and benchmarking. Through LENS, fellowship sites can connect that work with leadership development, talent priorities and a broader network of healthcare colleagues.

7. Our fellowship site is not currently in LENS. What is our 2027 option?

Your organization may participate through Focus at $5,000 annually, selecting NCAF as its community. This includes NAFCAS platform access, the fellowship community and eligible Focus benefits. If recruitment tools alone meet your needs, NAFCAS Only is available as a separate $1,750 subscription without LENS community membership.

8. Our fellowship site already belongs to LENS. Is there an additional charge?

Your organization's LENS and NCAF arrangements will be reviewed individually. Focus selects one community, Vista selects up to four, and Prism includes the full LENS portfolio, including NCAF. Our team will confirm your community selections and total 2027 membership investment.

9. What fellowship-specific resources and experiences continue?

NCAF remains a dedicated community for fellowship standards, peer collaboration, fellow development and benchmarking. NAFCAS platform access is included with NCAF community selection. Fellowship fairs, candidate connections and other fellowship learning opportunities follow the eligibility and participation terms in the prospectus and program communications.

10. What learning opportunities are available through Focus?

Focus includes one in-person Leadership Excellence Summit registration and four Leadership Accelerator Summit virtual registrations, alongside selected member learning and community connections. Discovery Forums, Learning Labs and workshops have limited seats at Focus. Coaching education has reduced member pricing with separate registration and fees; Mentorship Mastermind participation is subject to application review and cohort capacity.

11. Does Focus give our fellowship site access to every LENS community?

No. Focus selects one community, which is NCAF for the pathway described here. Reciprocal Academia & Industry Collaborative access is for academic graduate programs selecting NCAF; healthcare-provider participation in that collaborative is available at Prism. Broader community access follows the selected membership level and eligibility requirements.

12. How does this affect NAFCAS?

NAFCAS remains the fellowship application service, and platform access is included with NCAF community selection. The $5,000 Focus investment is an organizational membership amount, not a new application fee. Organizations that need fellowship posting, application management and candidate recruitment tools without LENS membership can select NAFCAS Only at $1,750.

View the 2027 LENS Membership Prospectus

Questions for both communities

Use the prospectus and your individualized renewal information together to confirm the membership pathway that fits your organization.

13. Why is NCAF becoming part of LENS?

Administrative fellowships are part of the healthcare leadership continuum. Bringing NCAF into LENS connects the work of preparing and recruiting emerging leaders with how organizations develop leaders, plan their workforces and strengthen leadership capability across career stages.

14. Will NCAF benchmarking continue?

Yes. NCAF benchmarking remains focused on administrative fellowships, drawing on fellowship sites, graduate programs, student applicants and administrative fellows. The NCAF benchmarking report is included with completion of the applicable survey for LENS members and NAFCAS Only subscribers. The separate Leadership Benchmarking Report is included for LENS members who complete its survey.

15. Will we need to select a community?

Focus selects one community; Vista selects up to four; Prism includes the full LENS portfolio. Select NCAF for fellowship community participation and included NAFCAS platform access. Academic graduate programs selecting NCAF receive reciprocal Academia & Industry Collaborative access. Vista may add up to two communities at the Focus membership rate per additional community.

16. How will existing LENS members know whether NCAF is included?

Our team will review current membership arrangements and 2027 engagement options with your primary contact. Individualized renewal information will confirm community participation, applicable benefits and any investment changes. Prism includes NCAF within its full LENS portfolio; other levels depend on community selections.

17. What should new or returning organizations do now?

Review the prospectus and contact our team to discuss your organization’s priorities. Existing NCAF graduate programs have a $2,000 transitional Focus investment for 2027. New graduate programs outside that transition and fellowship sites entering at Focus follow the standard $5,000 investment. Organizations already participating in LENS receive individual review of their arrangements.

18. Which benefits are included, and which have additional requirements?

Included Summit registrations are one in person and four virtual at Focus, two in person and six virtual at Vista, and four in person and eight virtual at Prism. Event registration details will be provided separately. Benchmarking reports require completion of the applicable survey. Coaching programs have separate registration and fees; mentorship participation is subject to application review and capacity. Framework member resources and inclusions are being finalized, with phased introduction beginning in 2027. See prospectus pages 9, 10, 15 and 16 for these qualifications.

Questions about your membership? Contact Christina Volpicelli at cvolpicelli@nchl.org **or** lens@nchl.org**.**

View the 2027 LENS Membership Prospectus