

HEALTH ADMINISTRATION, MASTER OF (M.H.A.)

Overview and philosophy

The Master of Health Administration program is designed to prepare persons for administrative roles ultimately leading to top-level executive positions in complex health services organizations. The curriculum emphasizes strategic and operational management, thus orienting students toward the broad spectrum of managerial problems and functions likely to be encountered by health services organizations.

The program's educational objectives and content are based upon the premise that a large number of students who select this curriculum aspire to become senior executives of health care organizations at some point in their careers. The graduate M.H.A. program is designed for full-time students.

The M.H.A. program was accredited initially in 1968, one of the first programs in the United States to achieve that status. It has continuously maintained its national accreditation status and in 2017 the program was awarded a seven-year accreditation.

The administrative residency/internship is an integral part of VCU's M.H.A. program. The basic purpose of the residency/internship is to provide students opportunities to apply and further develop their administrative knowledge and skills through a period of applied experience in an operational setting. The administrative residency/internship is supervised directly by experienced executives who serve as the students' preceptors.

Through a carefully selected and organized residency/internship experience, students strengthen the foundation of general knowledge and skills gained through the core curriculum and develop further insight and expertise in their selected concentrations. Students serve their residency/internship in the type of health care organization in which they wish to gain specialized knowledge, skills and experience. Overall policies and guidance for the administrative residency/internship are established by the Department of Health Administration and are included in the administrative residency handbook.

Students become eligible for entrance into the administrative residency/internship after completing specified course work and achieving an overall GPA of 3.0. Students on academic probation or with any incomplete grades during their final on-campus semester prior to their residency may be, at the discretion of the faculty, prevented from entering their residency although their overall GPA is 3.0 or higher. In addition to meeting the academic requirements, the student must, in the judgment of the faculty, present evidence of readiness for a clinical experience by demonstrating sufficient academic proficiency in the core areas of the curriculum and by demonstrating professional maturity. The director of the M.H.A. program or designee has the responsibility to coordinate residency placements. In making these assignments, the director will consider the preferences of the students, the preferences of the preceptors and the recommendations of faculty advisers.

Program goal

The specific mission of the Master of Health Administration program is to prepare early careerists for management and leadership positions within complex health care organizations. The program is nationally accredited

and has been consistently ranked in the top five programs in the nation by U.S. News and World Report.

The overall purpose of the Department of Health Administration in which the M.H.A. is housed is to provide top quality education, research and service related to the organization and administration of health care services. The department also has a major research program and is involved in a wide range of public service activities, including professional development programs for health services administrators and other health professionals.

The mission of the Department of Health Administration is to prepare, support and connect exceptional leaders who shape the health care industry. This is accomplished through:

1. Educating the next generation of health administrators and enhancing the skills of the present generation
2. Preparing a new generation of health services researchers and educators
3. Creating and disseminating basic and applied knowledge about the management, organization, financing, function and performance of the health care system
4. Serving people in the public and private sectors of the health care system

These activities, when mutually reinforced among all key people – faculty, staff, students, alumni – elevate the department to a premier status in the United States.

Student learning outcomes

Goal/domain	Competency	Description/learning outcomes
Communication and leadership management		
	Interpersonal communication	Build collaborative relationships and negotiation skills
	Writing skills	Prepare business communications
	Presentation skills	Demonstrate effective oral communication and presentation skills
Leadership		
	Leading and managing others	Hold self and others accountable for organizational goal attainment
	Change management	Promote and manage change
	Ability for honest self-assessment	Demonstrate reflection through self-assessment
	Systems thinking	Be able to assess the potential impacts and consequences of decisions in a broad variety of situations

	Problem-solving and decision-making	Apply evidence-based decision-making techniques to health care questions
--	-------------------------------------	--

Professionalism

	Personal and professional ethics	Adhere to ethical business principles; exhibit ethical behaviors
--	----------------------------------	--

	Professional and community contribution	Participate in community service; balance professional and personal pursuits
--	---	--

	Working in teams	Create, participate in and lead teams, including interprofessionalism
--	------------------	---

Knowledge of the health care environment

	Health care issues and trends	Demonstrate knowledge of circumstances causing major changes and reform in U.S. health care delivery
--	-------------------------------	--

	Health care legal principles	Discuss and critically analyze health-related legal principles including standards, regulations and risk management.
--	------------------------------	--

	Health policy	Articulate the impact of select health policies on the delivery of health services
--	---------------	--

	Population health and status assessment	Understand and explain the major factors in health status to health care professionals
--	---	--

Business and analytical skills

	Financial management	Demonstrate the ability to compile and analyze financial data; develop capital, operating and cash flow budgets; analyze investment data; pro forma development
--	----------------------	---

	Human resources	Apply methods and techniques related to the management of health care organization employees and professional staff
--	-----------------	---

	Organizational dynamics and governance	Understand and be able to explain the roles, responsibilities, structures and influence governing bodies hold in health care organizations
--	--	--

	Strategic planning	Ability to perform environmental analysis; discern competitive strategy; formulate business strategy based on evidence
--	--------------------	--

	Marketing	Analyze and assess markets, market segmentation, strategy, change and innovation
--	-----------	--

	Information management/ understanding and using technology skills	Apply techniques and methods to plan, design, implement and assess information flow and communication
--	---	---

	Quality improvement/ performance improvement	Apply concepts of process improvement and patient safety to relevant problems
--	--	---

	Quantitative skills	Analyze data and interpret quantitative information
--	---------------------	---

	Planning and managing projects	Design, plan, implement and assess projects related to performance, structure and outcomes of health services
--	--------------------------------	---

	Economic analysis and application	Analyze and apply economic theory and concepts to business decisions
--	-----------------------------------	--

VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs

The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website (<http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/>) and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/>)

Degree candidacy requirements

A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master's or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student's graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student's faculty regarding the student's academic achievements and the student's readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/candidacy/>)

Graduation requirements

As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on graduation requirements. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/>)

Other information

All enrolled students will be provided a handbook at orientation.

Apply online today. (<https://www.vcu.edu/admissions/apply/graduate/>)

Admission requirements

Degree:	Semester(s) of entry:	Deadline dates:	Test requirements:
M.H.A.	Fall	Mar 1 (Applications received by Jan 1 are given priority for funding.)	GRE/GMAT; TOEFL for international students

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements/>), applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. Baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution with a 3.0 GPA for all undergraduate work completed
2. Prerequisite course work in microeconomics, financial accounting and business statistics
3. A working knowledge of college-level algebra
4. Transcripts and VCU application forms

5. GRE/GMAT scores on verbal and quantitative at or above the 50th percentile
6. TOEFL scores required for international students: 600 (paper-based), 250 (computer-based) minimum
7. Professional resume
8. Three letters of reference
9. Present evidence of personal achievement, scholarship, intellectual ability and professional promise (personal statement)
10. Invited interview with M.H.A. admissions committee

The prerequisite requirements may be met by completing specified courses with a minimum grade of C within the past five years at any accredited college or university.

International applicants must submit evidence of a preapproved residency site in the home country and evidence of financial responsibility.

VCU Honors students are eligible to apply for admission to the M.H.A. program during the junior or senior year of undergraduate study. The application process is the same as for other applicants with the following exceptions: (1) requirements for the GRE or GMAT are waived, (2) application fee is waived and (3) official transcript is not needed (as grades can be accessed in the VCU system). The admission decision will be made by the M.H.A. admissions committee, at which time a place will be reserved for the student, provided the student graduates with honors and completes the prerequisite course work.

Candidates with one to two years of experience are preferred.

Degree requirements

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/>), students are required to complete a total of 59 credit hours (including transfer credit hours, if any) to qualify for the Master of Health Administration degree. This requirement includes 48 credit hours of core course work plus at least three credit hours of elective studies in health administration and related disciplines, such as business administration, urban and regional planning, public health and gerontology. In addition, eight credit hours of practicum course work are required as a part of the administrative residency. The graduate program is designed to provide a balanced combination of academic studies and field experience to enable students to achieve the program's educational goals and become well-prepared to enter the field of health administration.

Curriculum requirements

Course	Title	Hours
HADM 602	Health System Organization, Financing and Performance	3
HADM 603	Data Basecamp	2
HADM 606	Health Care Managerial Accounting	3
HADM 607	Financial Management in Health Organizations	3
HADM 608	Seminar in Health Care Finance	3
HADM 609	Population Health Management	3
HADM 610	Health Analytics and Decision Support	3
HADM 611	Health Care Law and Bioethics	3

HADM 612	Information Systems for Health Care Management	3
HADM 614	Health Care Marketing	2
HADM 615	Health Care Politics and Policy	3
HADM 624	Health Economics	3
HADM 646	Health Care Organization and Leadership	3
HADM 647	Management of Health Care Organizations	3
HADM 648	Strategic Management in Health Care Organizations	3
HADM 649	Human Resources Management in Health Care	2
HADM 681	Clinical Concepts and Relationships	2
HADM 682	Executive Skills I	1
HADM 683	Executive Skills II	1
HADM 694	Practicum in Health Administration I	5
HADM 695	Practicum in Health Administration II	3
Electives		
Select at least one of the following: ¹		2
GRTY 603	Social Gerontology	
GVPA 672	Social Equity and Public Policy Analysis	
HADM 620	Problem-Solving in Health Care Organizations	
HADM 662	Foundations of Health Equity	
HADM 663	Reducing Health Disparities	
HADM 692	Independent Study in Health Administration	
HSEP 601	Emergency Management: Response Planning and Incident Command	
HSEP 650	Public Health Preparedness	
INFO 661	Information Systems for Managers	
INNO 610	Innovation, Design Thinking and Change Management	
MGMT 637	Advanced Human Resource Management	
MGMT 655	Entrepreneurship	
PADM 601	Principles of Public Administration	
RHAB 688	Institutes and Workshops in Rehabilitation	
SCMA 677	Quality Management and Six Sigma	
Total Hours		59

1

The list is suggestive. Other graduate-level courses may be selected by a student, though they should be approved by the program director to ensure they meet requirements.

The minimum number of graduate credit hours required for this degree is 59.

Sample plan of study

Year one

Fall semester		Hours
HADM 602	Health System Organization, Financing and Performance	3
HADM 603	Data Basecamp	2
HADM 609	Population Health Management	3
HADM 646	Health Care Organization and Leadership	3
HADM 682	Executive Skills I	1
Elective		2
Term Hours:		14

Spring semester

HADM 606	Health Care Managerial Accounting	3
HADM 610	Health Analytics and Decision Support	3
HADM 647	Management of Health Care Organizations	3
HADM 648	Strategic Management in Health Care Organizations	3
HADM 683	Executive Skills II	1
Term Hours:		13

Year two

Fall semester

HADM 607	Financial Management in Health Organizations	3
HADM 612	Information Systems for Health Care Management	3
HADM 615	Health Care Politics and Policy	3
HADM 624	Health Economics	3
Term Hours:		12

Spring semester

HADM 608	Seminar in Health Care Finance	3
HADM 611	Health Care Law and Bioethics	3
HADM 614	Health Care Marketing	2
HADM 649	Human Resources Management in Health Care	2
HADM 681	Clinical Concepts and Relationships	2
Term Hours:		12

Year three

Fall semester

HADM 694	Practicum in Health Administration I	5
Term Hours:		5

Spring semester

HADM 695	Practicum in Health Administration II	3
Term Hours:		3

Total Hours: 59

The minimum number of graduate credit hours required for this degree is 59.

Contact

Paige Powell, Ph.D.
Program director
powellm9@vcu.edu

Additional contact

Cameron Parkins

Graduate student services administrator
parkinsc@vcu.edu (rchaga@vcu.edu)

Program website: ha.chp.vcu.edu/programs/mha-program