

USCPrice

Sol Price School of Public Policy

Residency Handbook

Master of Health Administration

INTRODUCTION

The USC Master of Health Administration (MHA) Program is designed on the premise that health management and policy students should have the benefit of practical field experience to prepare them for the complexities of leading people and organizations in the health care environment.

Students obtain critical skills and experiences leading up to the administrative residency through coursework, internships, networking, site visits at successful health care organizations, and involvement in professional groups. Thus, the administrative residency is a capstone learning opportunity as it allows the student to integrate and apply knowledge and talents in an actual organization.

GOALS

The goals of the administrative residency are to:

- Obtain practical exposure and experience in key management areas within health care organizations
- Develop and implement specific work products that can be used as part of a portfolio that reflects skills and competencies unique to the resident
- Identify and remedy any areas of competency-based performance areas needing improvement or expansion
- Provide organizations with an important resource to address current and future needs.

RESIDENCY TIMELINE

The primary focus during the first-year is on the student's academic coursework. The recommended two-year course sequence is designed for students to complete more academically rigorous units in their first-year so that their second-year schedules can accommodate residency hours. The first-year of the program should be viewed as a time of preparation, search and selection. Students are expected that they will start their residency during the summer following the completion of their first-year.

PREREQUISITES

The USC MHA degree program requires 48 semester units of coursework, plus a residency component. Students are required to complete at least 10 semester units of their academic program before they may apply for a residency. Students are required to complete at a minimum the following core courses as a residency foundation:

- **PPD 501a/506:** Economics for Policy, Planning and Development/Introduction to Microeconomics (2 units)
- **PPD 509:** Problems and Issues in the Health Care Field (4 units)
- **PPD 516:** Accounting in Health Care Organizations (4 units)

No student may begin his or her residency before completing the above coursework (10 units). Any hours worked during this time period will not count toward the 1000-hour residency requirement. Requests to initiate a residency without completing all of these courses may be approved by the Program Director in some situations and only upon petition at the time of completing the Residency Application.

EXPECTATIONS OF RESIDENTS

The residency experience provides students with a valuable learning opportunity so that students successfully develop administrative experience while acquiring a deeper understanding of the healthcare industry. All students are expected to follow the residency program guidelines determined by the MHA Programs Office. Following these guidelines will ensure that all students maximize his or her experience and serve as a positive representative of the USC MHA Program. All students are expected to:

- **Act in a professional and ethical manner, which includes adhering to the sponsoring organization's policies and procedures.** As a participant in the USC MHA Residency Program, your communication and behavior is a reflection of the program and University.
- **Secure a residency.** The responsibility of securing a residency lies with the student. While the MHA Programs Office will assist in this process, students need to actively network with healthcare professionals and explore professional opportunities to successfully secure a residency. The MHA Programs Office is not responsible for placing a student in a residency.
- **Be Prepared.** Prior to the residency, students should prepare by conducting a candid self-assessment of their strengths, by learning about targeted organizations, and by developing professional job search skills. Students can do this by speaking with the MHA Program Administrator, the Career Services Office, their faculty advisor, and the MHA program faculty and adjunct faculty.
- **Meet deadlines and complete all required residency components.** All required residency documents must be submitted by the mutually determined deadlines. Completing 1,000 hours by itself will not satisfy the residency requirement. All components, which include applications, evaluations, and completing hours, must be fulfilled in order for the residency requirement to be considered satisfied. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all documentation is submitted by the appropriate deadlines.
- **Effectively communicate.** Students are expected to meet/communicate with their Preceptor on a regular basis to identify projects, review work progress, discuss managerial issues, and receive mentorship. Students are also expected to communicate any changes, problems, or conflicts to the MHA Programs Office.

RESIDENCY PREPARATION

MHA Students are afforded a variety of opportunities to learn about the many dimensions of careers in the health care field. In anticipation of their residencies, students are encouraged to begin investigating career options as early as possible. We encourage students to find out which career prospects offer the best fit through the development of a contact network through events with alumni and other industry

leaders, participation in professional associations, guest lecturers in classes, internships, and staying current with the health care literature. We strongly urge students to take advantage of the unique industry access they have during their academic preparation.

USC Price Career Services Office

The USC Sol Price School of Public Policy is committed to supporting students in achieving their career goals. The Price Career Services Office offers many special programs and services, which include:

- Individual counseling, including resume review and interview strategies
- Job and internship postings on the Price School Career Development Office website
- Networking and career development events in Los Angeles

USC MHA Programs Office

The USC MHA Programs Office assists students in their residency preparation during their first year.

1. **PPD 512 Health Administration Residency Seminar (*spring semester*)**: This seminar will help prepare students for the residency by developing key skills and abilities to make them competitive for residencies and introducing residency opportunities.
2. **Residency Showcase (*February/March*)**: The Residency Showcase is an annual event where preceptors from local hospitals and other health care organizations interview MHA students for residency opportunities.

Networking

MHA Students should consider networking as a long-term investment in their career where the key purpose is to build meaningful, mutually beneficial relationships with other health care professionals. These professionals include *health care administrators, USC Price Alumni, USC Price Faculty, and peers.*

There are many benefits of networking, which include:

- Showcasing your talents, skills and interests to other health care professionals
- Learning about professional opportunities
- Expanding your contacts
- Receiving “behind the scenes” information
- Support or mentorship

In anticipation of the residency, students are encouraged to obtain employment or internship in a health care setting prior to beginning their residency. Students are also encouraged to attend various USC and Student Health Council events, such as career panels, MHA alumni events and others in order to meet alumni and potential preceptors.

PRECEPTOR ROLE & EXPECTATIONS

The preceptor is important to a successful and valuable residency experience for both the resident and the sponsoring organization. Participation in the residency program requires dedication and a considerable time commitment on the part of the preceptor, who generally is responsible for one resident at a time. To ensure that students receive the guidance and support they require during the

residency experience, we look for preceptors who have senior level capabilities in a healthcare organization for a minimum of two years.

The preceptor's main responsibilities are to:

1. Be familiar with the goals and requirements of the USC MHA Residency Program. Please contact the program director if you have any questions.
2. If possible, attend USC sponsored events (e.g. Fall Networking Night, Residency Showcase, etc.) to meet our students (both residency seekers and those up-and coming), network with colleagues, and interact with Price School and the MHA Program leadership.
3. Interview students interested in the available residency opportunity and provide constructive feedback to students not selected for the residency opening.
4. Extend the residency offer and complete the MHA Residency Application in cooperation with the resident. Stipends, salaries or other benefits for residency positions vary and are negotiated between the sponsoring organization and the student.
5. Guide development of a residency plan for the resident to accomplish during the residency experience. The residency plan (part of the Residency Application) must be submitted for approval at least two weeks prior to the student commencing the residency.
6. Orient the resident to the sponsoring organization, personnel, policies, procedures, and available resources.
7. Be a mentor, coach and role model to the resident and help the resident apply administrative theories to the actual operations of a health organization.
8. Set a regular meeting schedule for the purpose of communicating potential projects, reviewing work and progress, discussing managerial issues and current health care topics, and providing overall direction to the resident.
9. Complete and submit in a timely fashion the preceptor's evaluation of the resident at both the mid-point and end of the residency. Delays in receiving these documents may adversely affect the resident's graduation date.

RESIDENCY COMPONENTS

There are [6 components](#) to the residency program that must be completed in order to satisfy the residency requirement:

1. **Residency Application**
2. **Student Mid-Point Evaluation**
3. **Preceptor Mid-Point Evaluation**
4. **Student Final Evaluation**
5. **Preceptor Final Evaluation**
6. **Completion of Residency Hours (timesheet)**

1. Residency Application

The purpose of the residency plan is to:

- Inform the MHA Programs Office where the residency will be completed;
- Provide preceptor and organization information;
- Identify specific goals and list detailed projects that will be completed to achieve the stated goals;
- Show how the required hours will be completed.

Students are expected to adhere to the following policies regarding the residency application/plan:

- The residency application must be developed in collaboration with the preceptor.
- The residency application must be completed and submitted to the MHA Programs Office immediately after a residency opportunity has been offered and accepted. The MHA Programs Office will review and inform the student if the residency has been approved.
- The residency application must include an official offer letter from the hiring employer.
- Residency hours worked before the residency application that have been reviewed and approved will **not** be counted.

2. Mid-Point Evaluation

The mid-point evaluation is used to monitor the resident's progress. The MHA Programs Office views this as a learning opportunity for both the resident and the preceptor. When completing the mid-point evaluation, the residency and preceptor are encouraged to collaborate together so that assessment and reflection is most effective and will enhance the experience for both.

Students are expected to adhere to the following policies regarding the mid-point evaluation:

- The student must turn in the completed mid-point evaluation by the mutually agreed upon deadline indicated on the residency plan. **It is the student's responsibility to inform the MHA Program's Office if that date changes.**
- The student must communicate all residency requirements to their preceptor and give ample time to complete evaluations.

3. Final Evaluation

Similar to the mid-point evaluation, the purpose of the final evaluation is to highlight issues and accomplishments of the residency, summarize the overall performance of the resident, identify competency levels, and offer guidance. **It is not acceptable for the student and preceptor to submit both the mid-point and final evaluations after the hours have been completed.**

4. Residency Hours

All residencies are expected to be a minimum of 1,000 hours. This can be satisfied by a six-month, full-time placement, 40+ hours per week. Most students will complete a one-year, part-time commitment, 20+ hours per week, to complete the 1,000 hours. Students are required to provide verification that the 1000-hour requirement has been satisfactorily completed. The MHA Programs Office recommends that students regularly track each hour they work to ensure accurate records. Along with the final evaluation, students must also submit a timesheet that indicates the hours worked.

REDUCTION IN REQUIRED HOURS

Where students have obtained previous administrative experience in a health care organization, they may petition the Program Director to reduce the hour requirement for up to 500 hours. The Program Director will apply several criteria in this determination, including:

- Students are expected to have experience at a program or project level. Experience at the administrative assistant or entry level does not satisfy this requirement, in general.
- The number of years of health program experience prior to enrolling in the MHA program. An internship in a student's first semester will not warrant a reduction in residency hours.

If a student would like to pursue a reduction in their required residency hours, they must do so **before** submitting their residency application. Once a residency application has been submitted and approved, a petition to reduce the hours will not be accepted. A petition must be submitted to the MHA Programs Office and must include the following:

- Master's petition form: <https://priceschool.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Form.Masters-Petition-Form.pdf>
- Updated resume
- Written statement explaining why prior experience(s) warrant a reduction
 - This should include detailed information about specific projects the student was part of and/or accomplishments, including an approximate breakdown of hours spent on those higher level tasks

USING FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT AS A RESIDENCY

Students may not use their current employment toward their residency hours. However, a student may submit a petition to the MHA Programs Office so that these hours can be counted toward their required hours if they can demonstrate that they will be doing work above and beyond their existing job responsibilities. In order to use hours from a current position, a student must submit their petition before their residency application is approved. To petition, a student must submit the following:

- Master's petition form: <https://priceschool.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Form.Masters-Petition-Form.pdf>
- Updated resume
- Official copy of their current job description
- Detailed statement on additional projects they will take on in addition to their existing responsibilities
- A letter from a supervisor confirming that the project(s) to be worked on as part of this residency, is outside the scope of the employee's regular duties

MULTIPLE RESIDENCIES

Students are permitted to participate in more than one residency; however, to get the maximum learning potential, the MHA program advises that students do not complete their residency hours with more than two organizations. As part of the residency application, a student must indicate how many hours they anticipate completing within that organization. If a student reports less than 1,000 hours, the MHA Program's Office will assume that student will be completing multiple residencies and an additional residency application will be forthcoming. We strongly discourage students from completing multiple residencies if they have already committed their 1,000 hours to a particular organization.