

Introduction

The Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Administration (BSHCA) Internship is a required component of the program designed to provide students with practical experience in healthcare management and operations. The internship bridges academic knowledge with real-world applications and prepares students for professional roles by providing exposure to healthcare systems, leadership, and administrative practice.

Purpose & Objectives

The purpose of the BHA internship is to provide an opportunity for students to:

- Apply academic theory to practice in healthcare administration.
- Acquire and demonstrate core competencies required of healthcare managers.
- Understand interrelationships across departments, organizational structures, and external environments.
- Gain exposure to consumer and client populations, and organizational operations.
- Assess community, regulatory, and accreditation factors that affect healthcare organizations.
- Evaluate personal qualifications and commitment to the healthcare management profession.

Competencies

Competencies developed during the internship to align with AUPHA domains and the ACHE Healthcare Executive Competency Assessment Tool. These include:

- Leadership and Professionalism
- Communication and Relationship Management
- Healthcare Systems and Environment Knowledge
- Financial and Resource Management
- Human Resources and Organizational Behavior
- Strategic Planning and Marketing
- Quality and Performance Improvement

Field Internship Sites & Procedures

Students are responsible for identifying and securing their internship site, with guidance from the program coordinator and faculty advisors. Approved sites may include hospitals, long-term care facilities, rehabilitation centers, managed care organizations, insurance companies, consulting firms, government agencies, non-profits, and other healthcare-related organizations.

An affiliation agreement between WKU and the site must be in place prior to starting the internship. All required forms must be completed and submitted to the program office before enrollment in HCA 449.

The Preceptor

Each student will be assigned a preceptor at their internship site. Preceptors should hold at least a bachelor's degree in healthcare administration or a related field and have appropriate experience in leadership or management. Preceptors guide student learning, assign projects, monitor progress, and complete final evaluations.

Internship Details

Each BSHCA student must complete a minimum of 480 clock hours of internship in an approved healthcare organization or related setting. BSHCA students at WKU have the option to complete a NAB accredited pathway which requires a minimum of 1,000 clock hours of internship in an approved healthcare organization; 501 of those hours must be in a licensed nursing facility. See [NAB Addendum](#).

Eligibility: Students must have completed all 100, 200, and 300-level HCA courses, and at least 75% of 400-level courses, unless otherwise approved by their HCA advisor and/or Program Coordinator. Internship eligibility must be confirmed at least one semester prior to placement.

NAB Accreditation Note: Due to the additional number of internship hours, many NAB-seeking students start their internship hours earlier in the program. Please inform Internship instructor in such cases.

The following timeline is suggested to help ensure internship is secured in a timely manner:

Fall Internship	
Attend Internship Orientation	During Spring before internship year
Discuss Internship with Advisor	During Spring advising before internship year
Secure Internship by	June 15th
Submit Affiliation* form to Instructor by	June 30th
Start Internship by	By first day of the Fall semester
Complete Internship by	December 1st
Spring Internship	
Attend Internship Orientation	During Fall of internship year
Discuss Internship with Advisor	During Fall advising of internship year
Secure Internship by	November 15th
Submit Affiliation* form to Instructor by	November 30th
Start Internship by	By first day of the Spring semester
Complete Internship by	April 30th
Summer Internship	
Attend Internship Orientation	During Fall of internship year
Discuss Internship with Advisor	During Fall advising of internship year
Secure Internship by	March 15th
Submit Affiliation* form to Instructor by	March 31st
Start Internship by	By first day of the Summer semester
Complete Internship by	July 31st

Internship Rotations & Exposure

Students are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism, adhere to organizational policies, and contribute to host organizations in meaningful ways. Interns represent both the HCA program and Western Kentucky University.

Students should be exposed to a range of administrative and operational areas. Suggested rotations include:

- Executive Leadership (Strategic Planning, Governance)
- Human Resources (Recruitment, Training, Performance Management)
- Finance and Revenue Cycle (Budgeting, Billing, Denials Management)
- Compliance and Legal (Credentialing, Regulatory Standards)
- Marketing and Community Outreach
- Nursing, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Services
- Health Information Management (Patient Records, Security, Privacy)
- Materials Management (Purchasing, Inventory, Supply Chain)
- Patient Advocacy, Case Management and Discharge Planning
- Operations (Facilities, Security, Environmental Services, Dietary)
- Quality and Safety (Infection Control, Patient and Employee Safety and Education)

Reports & Assignments

Students must complete the following assignments during the internship:

- Weekly Logs and Reports (submitted via Blackboard)
- Internship Project (approved by faculty and preceptor)
- Student Evaluation of Internship Site & Preceptor
- Preceptor Evaluation of Student

Evaluation & Grading

This is a pass/fail class. All reports/assignments/evaluations must be submitted in order to receive the final grade. Due dates may be negotiated with instructor if start and end dates of internship do not coincide with internship course. Internship courses start and end on dates set by the university for the corresponding semester.

Commented [MR1]: Clarify

Policies & Professional Conduct

Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of ethics and professional conduct. Policies include:

- Compliance with organizational rules and confidentiality policies
- Observance of ethical standards and HIPAA requirements
- Professional dress and demeanor
- Punctuality and attendance at all scheduled hours
- Completion of tasks as assigned by the preceptor

Appendix A: HCA Internship Approval by Program

Student Name: _____

Student ID#: _____

HCA Primary Advisor Name: _____

Seeking NAB Accreditation? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Internship interests (location/organizations/facility types):

Term/Year internship will be completed: _____

Does student have any special challenges or needs with internship completion? Examples of items to discuss may include but are not limited to needing part-time hours, extension, GPA considerations, NAB accreditation standards, geographical restrictions, financial aid limits on semester registering, etc.

By signing below, the student states he/she has reviewed internship guidelines. The student also acknowledges that it is his/her responsibility to first secure an internship location, second obtain proper approvals on the site affiliation form, and last request registration to the appropriate internship course as is required for his/her degree.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

By signing below, the Program Coordinator acknowledges that he/she authorizes the student to seek internship placement. The signature does not signify that the internship site affiliation form has been fully approved as is required before the student can be placed in the internship course.

HCA Program Representative: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B: Application for Internship Site Affiliation

Student Name: _____ Student ID#: _____

Agency Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

President/CEO of Agency/or Signature Party: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ e-mail: _____

Type of Organization:

- ☐ Hospital - number of beds: _____
- ☐ Nursing Home - number of beds: _____
- ☐ Home Health Agency - visits per year: _____
- ☐ Ambulatory Care Center - visits per year: _____
- ☐ Professional Group Practice - number of providers: _____
- ☐ Insurance Company
- ☐ Health Related Product Sales
- ☐ Community Agency
- ☐ Government Office
- ☐ Other - Specify: _____

Type of licensure held: _____

Type of Accreditations: _____

Preceptor name: _____

Preceptor title: _____

Preceptor department: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ e-mail: _____

Signature of person completing this form or if completed by student, name of agency contact person providing information:

Signature: _____ Title: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____ Phone: _____

Appendix C: HCA 449 Healthcare Administration Internship – Responsibilities

I, _____, have read all the documentation concerning the Healthcare Administration Internship including the internship guide, sample rotation plan, and sample weekly report.

I understand that I must submit

1. the Project Initiation form,
2. the Site Affiliation Information Form
3. the Project Completion form,
4. a weekly report detailing the work and observations made during the week and to submit it to the Faculty Advisor for the internship course
5. the actual written internship project paper (approximately 7-10 pages), |
6. the twelve (12) weekly logs or the internship period of 12 weeks – 480 hours of work (there may be more reports if an intern needs to stretch the internship beyond 12 weeks at 40 hours per week), |
7. the student's evaluation of the program, the Preceptor's evaluation of the student, and the contact information sheet.

I understand that I received a complete and detailed briefing on the requirements of the internship.

I understand that if I cannot submit the majority of materials by the last week of the semester, it is highly likely that I will not graduate at the end of the internship semester and the internship period will carry over to the next semester, ultimately delaying my graduation to the end of that next semester. In this case an Incomplete grade will be issued, and this grade will change once all requirements have been submitted. If they are not submitted by the university designated date for Incomplete grades, the grade will automatically be "F". |

| I have read all the above statements and understand that if I fail to comply with these internship requirements, then graduation will be delayed until the end of the following semester date. |

Student Signature

Date

Faculty Member Signature

Date

Commented [MR2]: Is this different from the 2-3 page weekly report
Some of this seems redundant/repetitive

Commented [HN3R2]: This is referring to the log, not report, which is different from the 2-3 page report. There was an error, it has been corrected.

Commented [MR4]: Full is not needed

Commented [MR5R4]: As above

Commented [HN6R4]: I am deleting this as it has already been mentioned how due dates will work in the paragraph above.

Commented [MR7]: I would say failure to complete the internship requirements could delay graduation

Commented [HN8R7]: edited.

Appendix D: NAB Addendum



The National Association of Long-Term Care Administrator Boards (NAB) is the Nation's leading authority on regulating administrators of organizations along the continuum of long-term care. NAB's brand is recognized as the authority for leadership core competencies in long-term care for the following:

- Established standards of excellence for the Health Services Executive (HSE) credential.
- Development of valid and defensible examinations for the *Health Services Executive* profession (residential care/assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services).
- Review and approval of continuing education programs.
- Accreditation of *Health Services Executive* degree programs for colleges and universities – the BSHCA at WKU is currently ***one of only 15*** universities in the United States ('25) and there are currently ***less than 5*** registered HSE Qualified Administrators in Kentucky!
 - Students pursuing the NAB accreditation option at WKU will be completing an education pathway qualification accepted by many states as meeting both education and experience requirements for licensure.
 - The higher number of internship hours required for this option is set by NAB due to professional license standards established by most state boards.
 - Each state has its own requirements for obtaining an NHA, RCAL, or HCBS license, as well as different requirements for being an AIT or for continuing education once a license is granted.

Students interested in this option complete the following at WKU:

1. Bachelor of Science in Health Care Administration
2. Long-Term Care Administration Undergraduate Certificate
3. 1,000 clock hours of internship in an approved healthcare organization with a minimum of 501 hours in a licensed nursing facility.

For more information, contact Melanie Eaton, HSE at melanie.eaton@wku.edu and/or visit <https://www.nabweb.org/home>