

Course Descriptions

SECTION 1: PRINCIPLES AND FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATION

HCA 501

Principles and Foundations of Health Care Administration

This course introduces students to the field of health care administration, the health care system, and basic concepts and skills in financial management. The course examines the ethical basis of health care, which is then applied to the ethics of health care professionals, managerial ethics, and distributive justice within the health care system. The purpose of this course is also to lay the foundation for the HCA curriculum in quantitative and financial analysis. (3 credits)

SECTION 2: BASIC CONCEPTS, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

HCA 502

Quantitative Analysis for Health Care Administration

This course is designed to give students experience using basic statistical tools to analyze and interpret data. The emphasis is on multiple regression, but t-tests, ANOVA, and non-parametric statistics will also be covered. Students practice applying statistical tools to common managerial problems. The course is also concerned with the reliability and validity of data and conclusions. Statistical software is used in this course. (2 credits)

HCA 503

Epidemiology and Health Information

This course focuses on the acquisition and analysis of data about the health status of individuals and populations. It includes basic concepts in epidemiology such as population-based measures of health status, descriptive epidemiology and managerial epidemiology. Sources of data are investigated and assessed. Students are exposed to community health needs assessments. (2 credits)

HCA 504

Market Principles in Health Care

The United States relies on competition and market forces to determine the results of most of our economic activities. Important decisions about health care financing, the provision of medical services, and priorities in health care depend upon beliefs about how well the market can work in health care. This course examines the use, and potential abuse, of market forces in health care. Among the topics that are considered are: market failures in health insurance; the market power of health professionals; horizontal and vertical integration of providers; tax policy and medical savings accounts; myths and realities regarding the behavior of for-profit and not-for-profit organizations; and the theory and practice of managed competition. (2 credits)

HCA 505

Managing People in Health Care

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the requirements of effective healthcare leadership and with foundation skills for leadership excellence. In addition, because of the need for interdisciplinary teamwork in the healthcare workplace, a primary emphasis of this course is to prepare students to lead interdisciplinary teams successfully as well as to be effective members of such teams. Course content in this section of the program curriculum addresses leadership from intra- and interpersonal as well as health care team perspectives. Topics include motivation, leadership style, diversity, communication, conflict sources, conflict resolution and behavioral fundamentals of project management. (2 credits)

HCA 508

Quality in Health Care

This course examines of the concept of quality and investigates and critiques the literature on consumer satisfaction and patient safety. Various approaches to continuous quality improvement are assessed for their relevance to health care organizations. Students examine methods for measuring, benchmarking, and assessing organizational performance along dimensions such as financial results, clinical services, utilization, productivity, and the health of the community. (2 credits)

HCA 509**Health Care Accounting and Financial Management**

This course addresses financial management concepts and practices in health services organizations by blending together the topics of accounting and finance that have particular relevance to the health care manager. The course will cover applications common to all corporate finance, but will emphasize aspects and methods most encountered in health services. The central tasks of this course are to provide students with fundamental financial management concepts and analytical techniques and to teach students to apply those concepts and techniques to health service situations. Topics covered in this course are basic accounting, financial statements and ratios, evaluation of project investment decisions, break-even analysis, budgeting, cost allocation and reimbursement methodologies. (3 credits)

HCA 515**Case Analysis**

Students complete a case analysis and presentation. The case analysis allows students to show competence in financial, quantitative, and organizational analyses. Student deficiencies, if any, are identified, and remedial work assigned. (1 credit)

**SECTION 3:
INTERMEDIATE CONCEPTS, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

HCA 520**Designing and Managing Health Care Operations**

Students are introduced to organizational technology and structure (i.e. organization theory) as well as operations. The focus in the first part of the course is on underlying principles of effective organizational design, including line versus staff and departmental structures. Students are expected to be able to map people and jobs effectively, to organize work efficiently, and to lead projects successfully. Students also learn and use selected quantitative techniques in the efficient management of health care delivery such as forecasting, queuing, inventory analysis, and statistical process control. (3 credits)

HCA 521**Human Resource Management**

This course is concerned with the management of human resources in health care organizations. It begins with consideration of the human resource function as carried out by managers of units. Major areas covered include: recruitment, interviewing and selection; retention (including compensation and benefits); diversity; performance management; and career development. The latter part of the course is devoted to the laws and regulations that frame human resource management including employment law and OSHA; fair employment practices; wrongful termination and privacy; National Labor Relations Act (and unions); and strikes and boycotts. (3 credits)

SHS 450**The Health Care System: An Interdisciplinary Perspective**

This course provides a comprehensive overview of the structure, function, and financing of the United States health care system. It focuses on the critical issues facing the United States with emphasis on the relationships among providers, payers, and patients. The course is designed to foster an appreciation for the myriad interdependent actors within the health care system and for the widespread consequences of decisions in the clinical, policy and management arenas. The behavior of key actors within the system (for example, providers, private and government payers, and patients) are examined in the context of current economic, political, and ethical developments. Students are encouraged to analyze the system critically and to consider ways in which it might be restructured to improve its efficiency, effectiveness and equity. The course is required for all matriculated graduate students within the School for Health Studies. (3 credits)

HCA 522**Health Information Management**

This course will examine issues in the management of health information and related technologies. It includes topics such as systems and data used in managing health information today, strategic and project planning for information technology investments, HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) requirements, coding and informatics standards, experiences with computerized medical records and internet applications, and the organization of information management functions. Students are required to develop a plan for technology introductions using a situation from their own institution. (2 credits)

HCA 523**Competitive Positioning and Marketing**

The continued viability of health care organizations depends in large measure on the strategic sophistication of their leadership and their ability to effectively market their products. In this portion of the curriculum, students will learn the concepts and skills required to: develop a strategic vision for a health care organization, taking into account the values of senior management; use economic models to determine the competitive position of a health care organization; recognize product life cycles; assess the effect of an organization's culture on its strategy; and evaluate economic and social barriers to entry and exit of a health care organization. The course also includes the key marketing concepts of SWOT analysis, competitive intelligence, social marketing, market segmentation, market positioning, branding, product differentiation and niche marketing. (4 credits)

HCA 524**Health Law**

This course addresses the major legal principles and issues relevant to health care administration. It covers the legal relationships between the patient and the provider, the provider and institution, and the patient and institution. It introduces various forms of corporate organization, including profit and not-for-profit. It highlights cost control, quality control and access to services. Legal issues relating to admission and discharge, emergency treatment, medical records and mental health treatment are covered. (2 credits)

HCA 531**Research Design**

During this course students develop a research proposal that demonstrates their knowledge and understanding of the crucial concepts of research design, sampling, data collection, measurement, and analysis of data. Techniques for improving the reliability and validity of studies are included. (1 credit)

SECTION 4: RELATING THE ORGANIZATION TO THE ENVIRONMENT

HCA 545**Health Care Policy Politics**

This course introduces students to health policy in relation to the American democratic experience. The course provides students with the skills and knowledge needed to participate effectively in the development and analysis of legislation and policy. Students examine the political processes within which legislation and policy are developed. The course identifies the rationales for public policy and major actors and stakeholders within the myriad health policy communities. The ethical dilemmas that arise in policy making and analysis are included. (2 credits)

HCA 530**Advanced Financial and Strategic Frameworks**

This course focuses on the knowledge and skills required to conduct advanced strategic and financial analyses of an organization's external environment, thus enabling students to define and lead radical change in health care services. Mergers and acquisitions are investigated. Capital budgeting and sources of capital are included as are debt and investment. Current issues in fraud and abuse in the healthcare environment are included. Students are introduced to a framework for conducting advanced strategic analyses and making innovative organizational recommendations on the basis of these. The framework includes tools and techniques for portfolio assessment and new business development, as well as an introduction to strategic control systems. (4 credits)

HCA 540**Fieldwork** (4 credits)

At the end of the Program, students are required to do four credits of fieldwork with supervision by a faculty member. Field projects are presented and defended to the faculty. Students may choose from the following options:

1. A health care research paper of publishable quality (the potential journals must be identified and the research be designed, conducted, and reported according to one of the journal's standards)
2. A short-term internship within a health care institution (a project must be described and submitted, demonstrating quantitative and/or financial analytic competency)