

This handbook contains basic program information for students accepted into the Master of Science in Healthcare Administration program at the University of Arkansas Fort Smith.

MHCA Student Handbook

Effective Fall 2016

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Executive Director's Welcome

I want to welcome you to the University of Arkansas Fort Smith's Master of Science in Healthcare Administration program! I also want to congratulate you as you make this commitment to further your education and your healthcare career opportunities.

Healthcare executives have the opportunity to make a significant contribution to improving the health of the citizens in the communities they serve. Healthcare administrators plan, direct, and coordinate medical and health services, as well as shape healthcare policy. Healthcare executives must be able to adapt to changes in healthcare laws, regulations, and technology. Responsibilities can include facilities, services, programs, staff, budgets, and relations with other organizations. When evaluating candidates for entry-level positions, employers look for knowledge of the healthcare environment, general management skills, professionalism and leadership skills, communication and relationship management skills, business planning skills, and quantitative skills. This program will provide you with the competencies – the knowledge, skills, and values – that will help you be an effective and innovative healthcare executive.

I believe in **excellence** in everything, both personally and professionally. Excellence requires disciplined practice in commitment and consistency, along with innovation. Dick Nettell, who has diverse experience as an Operations and Client Services Executive, holds the motto of PRIDE – *Personal Responsibility In Delivering Excellence*. I challenge you as student of this program to practice this motto as you progress through this program and carry it into your professional lives. **Excellence** is the foundation of the values held by the MHCA program as well as the UAFS College of Health Sciences.

I encourage you to commit to showing up in the online learning environment. Take advantage of the course content, information, and opportunities the MHCA program faculty present. Participate fully in your courses. Share your experiences. Encourage your peers.

This handbook is intended to inform, guide, and direct you in regards to aspects and expectations of the MHCA program. If you have questions concerning any aspect of the MHCA program, feel free to contact me.

Again, welcome to the MHCA program! I am grateful you have chosen to join our program and look forward to your becoming a competent leader of the healthcare industry.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wittney Jones".

Dr. Wittney Jones, Executive Director - MHCA

CONTACT INFORMATION

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OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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UAFS TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Information <http://uafs.edu/about/technology-services>

Live Chat <https://my.uafs.edu/Site/view.cfm?siteID=1&OldCFID=327b707c-f9c2-44aa-a74e-88811dbaeb39>

PROGRAM HISTORY

In August of 2015, the University of Arkansas Fort Smith began offering its first graduate degree, a Master of Science in Healthcare Administration (Online Program). The program is designed to prepare students for management and leadership in the healthcare industry. The MHCA program holds an associate graduate membership with the Association of University Programs in Health Administration (AUPHA), which is a global network of colleges, universities, faculty, individuals and organizations dedicated to the improvement of health and healthcare delivery through excellence in healthcare management and policy education. The program will be seeking accreditation with the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME), which establishes the standard of measurement of graduate healthcare management education.

MISSION

To provide the knowledge and skills needed to prepare competent, ethical, and innovative healthcare leaders who can improve access, quality, efficiency, and equity of health services across a global health industry.

VISION

To be recognized as a program that promotes the development of graduates who are academically and professionally prepared to be healthcare leaders who can successfully manage and lead their organizations and communities, from a local to a global level.

VALUES

The MHCA program in the College of Health Sciences at the University of Arkansas Fort Smith holds the value of ***excellence*** in the following areas:

- Graduate education that utilizes adult learning theory and innovative online learning techniques.
- Ethical and professional behavior, including respect and integrity.
- Evidence-based research, practice, and results.
- Service to our fellow citizens and community.
- Cooperation and collaboration with others for the betterment of healthcare.
- Personal and professional growth through life-long learning.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Demonstrate knowledge of the healthcare system and the environment in which healthcare managers and providers operate, strategic planning, and healthcare policy analysis.

Integrate and apply business principles, skills, and knowledge, including systems thinking, to the healthcare environment.

Display clear and concise communication skills with internal and external stakeholders, establish and maintain relationships, and facilitate constructive interactions with individuals and groups.

Demonstrate transformational leadership that supports innovation, critical thinking, and ethical decision making while inspiring individual and organizational excellence.

Practice professionalism through personal and professional accountability, development, and lifelong learning while contributing to the community and the profession.

PROGRAM ASSOCIATIONS AND ACCREDITATION

AUPHA (<http://www.aupha.org/home>)

As noted in the program's history, the UAFS MHCA program holds an associate graduate membership with the Association of University Programs in Health Administration (AUPHA), which is a global network of colleges, universities, faculty, individuals and organizations dedicated to the improvement of health and healthcare delivery through excellence in healthcare management and policy education. Its mission is to foster excellence and drive innovation in health management and policy education, and promote the value of university-based management education for leadership roles in the health sector. It is the only non-profit entity of its kind that works to improve the delivery of health services – and thus the health of citizens – throughout the world by educating professional managers.

CAHME (<http://www.cahme.org/>)

The MHCA program will also be seeking accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME). CAHME serves the public by promoting, evaluating, and improving the quality of graduate healthcare management education in the United States and Canada. CAHME is an interdisciplinary group of educational, professional, clinical, and other health sector organizations devoted to quality improvement of education for healthcare management and administration professionals. CAHME is the only organization recognized to grant accreditation to individual academic programs offering a professional master's degree in healthcare management education and is recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation.

Why is CAHME accreditation important? CAHME accreditation is the benchmark for students and employers alike that ensures the integrity of healthcare management education. CAHME accreditation establishes the standard of measurement of graduate healthcare management education for the world community. Prospective students know that selecting a CAHME accredited healthcare management program means they are assured the program strives to be exceptional.

Additionally, more than 90% of graduates from CAHME accredited programs are placed in various healthcare management positions within 3 months of graduation and a majority of postgraduate administrative fellowship offerings prefer a student from an accredited healthcare management program.

GRADUATE STUDIES AT UAFS

Graduate Studies programs are overseen by the Associate Provost. For information related to programs, policies, and procedures, please refer to the following links:

Graduate Studies Catalog (<http://academics.uafs.edu/academics/graduate-studies-catalog-and-forms>)

Graduate Calendar

(http://academics.uafs.edu/sites/academics.uafs.edu/files/Departments/Academics/Graduate_Calendar.pdf). Please note that some of the graduate program dates (i.e., drop date) are different than the undergraduate dates at UAFS.

If you have any questions and concerns related to Graduate Studies, please feel free to contact the MHCA Executive Director or the Graduate Studies office at 479-788-7660 or graduate-studies@uafs.edu.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

ANDRAGOGY

The fields of higher education and administration deal with adult learners on a daily basis. Understanding that graduate students are typically adults, this program is founded on the assumptions of andragogy, a model for adult learning. Andragogy represents a shift in educational theory from teaching (subject-centered) to learning (task or problem-centered), with the instructor becoming a facilitator for the self-directed and autonomous learner, which especially holds true for the online learning environment. Andragogy holds the following core principles:

Self-concept: As people mature, they move forward from being a dependent personality to being self-directed.

Experience: As people mature, they have many experiences that can be used as a resource for learning.

Readiness to learn: As people mature, readiness to learn is a function of the perceived relevance of the topic.

Orientation to learn: Adults learn those things that will help them solve a problem in real life.

Motivation to learn: With maturity, internal motivation is the key to learning.

The need to know: With maturity, people need to know why they need to know something.

ONLINE/DISTANCE LEARNING

The MHCA program is a fully online program. CAHME defines online/distance learning as *a formal educational process in which the majority or all of the instruction occurs when the learner and the*

instructor are not in the same place at the same time. This online program provides a rigorous academic experience. Our goal is to produce competent, thoughtful, and servant-focused healthcare leaders through the online learning environment. You as a student must be willing to engage within the online environment.

Recent research findings indicate that improving employment opportunities through promotion or a new position and wanting a new career field are primary motivators for choosing an online degree program. An online degree program allows students the flexibility to participate in a program from virtually anywhere and at a time of day that is convenient to them. Additionally, having full-time jobs and families as well as the rising cost of higher education has made part-time degree completion more of a necessity. Some of the MHCA students are full-time students but most are part-time.

The Blackboard Learning Management System (BLS or LMS) at UAFS allows faculty to incorporate synchronous and asynchronous learning. For more information on this system, visit the UAFS Distance/Online Learning page (<http://academics.uafs.edu/distance-learning/distance-learning-home#>) and click on *Student Resources*.

UAFS ONLINE TESTING POLICY AND PROCTOR INFORMATION

If you do not live in the Fort Smith, Arkansas area and your course has major exams, you must complete the Proctor Form and submit it to your instructor at the **beginning of the semester and no later than 2 weeks into the course**. The proctor approval request form is located at <http://www.uafs.edu/sites/default/files/Distance/Proctor-Approval-Request-Form.pdf> and is also located under the Getting Started course link.

After receiving approval from your instructor, you may take the major exams in a proctored environment.

The following are the UA Fort Smith guidelines regarding proctored major exams for full online courses:

1. The student, in collaboration with the faculty, is responsible for securing the off-campus examination site.
2. Examination sites must be approved in advance by the faculty teaching the course with faculty notification to the Dean. Alternate examination procedures must be approved in advance by the Dean.
3. Approved sites may include other institutions of higher learning, secondary schools, and for-profit examination centers.
4. Proctors at an approved site must certify that the examination was completed under supervision.
5. The student is responsible for any costs incurred for testing at an off-campus site.

If you do live in the Fort Smith, Arkansas area, major exams are to be taken on campus at the Gordon Kelley Academic Success Center (ASC) in Vines Room 202. Contact your course instructor regarding this. Information for the ASC can be found at <http://www.uafs.edu/success/academic-success-center>.

COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

Competency-based education has become an accepted curriculum model in higher education, providing faculty, students, and employers with a common understanding of the requisite knowledge and skills for workplace success.

The use of a competency set or model is required for CAHME accreditation. CAHME defines competence/competency as *the effective application of available knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in complex situations. The essential knowledge, skills, and other attributes that are essential for performing a specific job or task.* The MHCA program uses a competency framework that was developed based on various nationally recognized healthcare administration competency models and on what other MHCA programs use across the country. Competencies are mapped across the program's curriculum, but not all competencies are addressed in each course. The [Profile of a UAFS MHCA Graduate](#) below provides a summary of the 5 core competency domains with sub-competencies for each.

PROFILE OF A UAFS MHCA GRADUATE

The UAFS Master's in Healthcare Administration Program prepares graduates to achieve excellence in their professional careers. The student's academic studies in combination with an internship experience should help develop the following competencies that are foundations for professional success:

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Ability to inspire individual, team, and organizational excellence, create a shared vision and effectively manage change.

- Leadership Skills and Behavior
- Organizational Climate and Culture
- Role of Vision
- Change Management
- Sensitivity to Diversity
- Context of Governance in Operations

COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Ability to communicate clearly and concisely with internal and external stakeholders, establish and maintain relationships, and facilitate constructive interactions with individuals and groups.

- Demonstrate effective written and oral skills
- Prepare and deliver business communications including meeting agendas, presentations, and business reports
- Provide and receive constructive feedback
- Demonstrate effective interpersonal relations
- Facilitation and negotiation

PROFESSIONALISM AND ETHICS

Ability to align personal conduct with ethical and professional standards that include a responsibility to the patient and community, a service orientation, and a commitment to lifelong learning and improvement.

- Personal and Professional Accountability
- Professional Development and Lifelong Learning
- Contributions to Community and Profession
- Ethical Behavior
- Emotional Intelligence

KNOWLEDGE OF HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS AND HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT

Ability to discuss and apply knowledge of the healthcare system and the interdisciplinary environment in which healthcare managers and providers function.

- Clinical Disciplines and Support Systems
- Patient and Family Perspectives
- Community Health Needs and the Broad Healthcare Environment
- Patient Safety
- Benchmarking Techniques

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS, AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Know, apply and integrate business principles, including systems thinking, to the healthcare environment. Areas in which these skills and knowledge are applicable include:

- General Management
- Financial Management
- Human Resource Management
- Organizational Dynamics and Governance
- Strategic Planning and Marketing
- Information Systems and Management
- Risk Management
- Quality Improvement
- Health Law and Regulations
- Health Policy and Economics

APA FORMAT

All courses in the MHCA program use APA formatting. The most recent edition of the APA manual is a required resource in the foundational courses (MHCA 5003/5013 - See your course syllabus for the specific edition). It is also acceptable to purchase APA software (e.g., Reference Point Software or PERRLA). However, software is not perfect. Ensure that your in-text citations and references match the most recent edition.

Please note that there are copy and paste issues with APA formatting into discussion forums. Subsequently, faculty focus within the discussion forum will be on the assignment content, adequate and appropriate responses, and the proper use of APA formatting for in-text citations and formatted references.

COURSE OF STUDY

Below is the current degree plan and recommended course of study for full-time MHCA students. Students are considered full-time if they take 9 credit hours and part-time if they take less than 9 credit hours. Students can complete this program on either a full-time (9 credit hours) or part-time (3 or 6 credit hours) basis.

FALL SEMESTER: 9 hours	
Credit Hours	Courses
3	MHCA 5003 Healthcare Systems
3	MHCA 5013 Healthcare Policy and Governance
3	MHCA 5023 Human Behavior in Healthcare Organizations
SPRING SEMESTER: 9 hours	
Credit Hours	Courses
3	MHCA 5033 Healthcare Law and Ethics
3	MHCA 5043 Research in Healthcare Administration**
3	MHCA 6003 Budgetary Issues in Healthcare Services
SUMMER SEMESTER: 3 hours	
Credit Hours	Courses
3	MHCA 6013 Information Systems Management in Healthcare
FALL SEMESTER: 9 hours	
Credit Hours	Courses
3	MHCA 6023 Managed Care and Reimbursement Systems
3	MHCA 6033 Healthcare Quality Improvement
3	MHCA 6043 Healthcare Administration Internship
SPRING SEMESTER: 3 hours	
3	MHCA 6053 Graduate Project in Healthcare Administration
Total Hours: 33	

Note. Changes to the curriculum are being considered and this degree plan is subject to change.

**Please note that successful completion of a statistics/probability course is required before you can take the MHCA 5043 Research course. It is recommended that if you have not taken such a course that you consider taking it during your first semester. Other prerequisites and corequisites are listed in the *Graduate Studies Catalog* as well as your course-specific syllabus.

PROGRAM POLICIES

CERTIFIED PROFILE

Due to the seriousness of the healthcare environment, privacy issues, risk of infection, and federal/state/hospital regulations, MHCA students must complete the requirements of Certified Profile. Once accepted into the program, students will be given instructions on how to register for Certified Profile, the costs associated with this requirement, and how to upload the necessary information. Information must be uploaded into Certified Profile by the specified date in the program acceptance letter. ***Failure to complete the required documentation by the specified date will result in the revocation of student's admission to the program.***

Items included in Certified Profile that the student must provide are:

- A current American Heart Association Heartsaver CPR AED or BLS for Healthcare Providers **SIGNED** card
- Current immunization record, including:
 - ✓ Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)
 - ✓ Hepatitis B
 - ✓ Varicella (Chicken Pox)
 - ✓ Tetanus, Diphtheria & Pertussis (Tdap)
 - ✓ TB Skin Test
 - ✓ Influenza
- Drug Testing
- Criminal Background Check (provided by Certified Profile)

Any adverse indicators on immunizations or the Student Health Statement/Medical Release form may require further explanation. Background check results that indicate past incidents will require clearance from all healthcare facility partners. These facilities have the authority to deny internship training to any student. Students unable to precept in any healthcare agency because of an adverse or negative background check will be unable to complete the program objectives thereby revoking admission to the program. A positive drug screen will also result in a revocation of admission into the MHCA Program.

MHCA STUDENT HEALTH STATEMENT/MEDICAL RELEASE

In addition to the Certified Profile requirements, the student must also submit the MHCA Student Health Statement/Medical Release form available at http://health.uafs.edu/sites/health.uafs.edu/files/Departments/Administration/mhca_health_packet_02.11.16.pdf. Pages 1-4 must be completed and submitted to Carol Hill, CHS Administrative Specialist, HS 112.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is expected that all students are honest and forthright in all of their academic studies. Therefore, students are expected to do their own work and not present others' work as their own; to do so degrades and devalues the educational process. The Academic Honesty Policy as listed in the *Graduate Studies Catalog* and in the statement below will be followed.

The Graduate Studies Catalog of the University of Arkansas – Fort Smith states in part: “UA Fort Smith is committed to helping students attain the highest level of academic achievement. That achievement is predicated on a foundation of scholastic integrity in all aspects of students’ academic work. This absolute standard of academic honesty lies at the heart of any pursuit of learning and the award of any degree or certificate.... Academic dishonesty in any form (including using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise; plagiarism; forgery; falsification of records; unauthorized possession of examinations; any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement; and the assistance of others in any such act) is forbidden.” Students may not gain or attempt to gain an academic advantage for that student or another student by misrepresenting a person’s work or by interfering with the completion, submission, or evaluation of work. Do not submit papers under your name that are, in reality, a slightly altered article or articles obtained from the Internet, library, papers from other students, or from other sources.

Faculty who have proof that a student is guilty of academic dishonesty may take appropriate action, up to and including, assigning the student a grade of “F” for the course and suspending the student from the class. The “F” will be the final grade and the student may not withdraw from the course with a “W”. A student may appeal either the finding of academic dishonesty or the penalty to the Academic Integrity Committee under guidelines listed in the UA Fort Smith Graduate Studies Catalog.

NETIQUETTE

Netiquette is a term that describes expected etiquette behaviors in an online environment. Netiquette is first and foremost about respect for others. It is important that students be aware of expected online behaviors.

Therefore you are expected to:

- Use complete sentences, proper spelling, and grammar.
- Avoid slang unless it is used as a specific topic in an online discussion.
- Avoid obscene words, swearing, cussing, cursing or threatening language.
- Be respectful of differences and value others opinions (even if you disagree with them).

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

We expect that all students will respect the rights of others. Sexual harassment, assault, discriminatory statements, harassment of other students (or groups) on the basis of sex, race, color, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, veteran status or other discriminating factor is not tolerated. For further information, please consult the *Graduate Studies Catalog*.

COURSE and FACULTY EVALUATION

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in courses. Evaluations are typically open during the last two weeks of the semester; students are notified when evaluations are

available. Evaluation is part of the quality feedback loop and a professional expectation from the student. Your honest opinion on courses and faculty performance is appreciated.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability, you can arrange for possible accommodations through the Student ADA Services office available at www.uafs.edu/ada or (479)788-7577.

ADA STATEMENT

UAFS seeks to make every effort to offer equal educational opportunities for all students. To ensure a total university experience for students with disabilities, UAFS provides reasonable accommodations and services to students who have physical, emotional and/or learning disabilities. The underlying philosophy is to provide support, where possible, that will maximize each student's opportunities for academic success.

Working in partnership with the student, the Student ADA Coordinator will develop an individualized plan for services which may include academic advising and accommodations in testing and instruction. A student with disabilities may present validation of his/her disability and request services by contacting the Student ADA Coordinator at (479)788-7577. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations each semester /term. To request academic accommodations, students are required to complete the application process before or at the beginning of each term.

TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES

This program is conducted fully online through the Blackboard Learning Management System (BLS). Therefore students need to have access to or knowledge of:

- Computer
- Stable Internet connection
- Basic understanding of computer usage
- Word process program such as MS Word that will allow you to create, edit, save, and retrieve documents
- Email
- Ability to download and install programs

Within each course there is a link on the left side of the course home page called "Online Orientation". This link contains information students need to know if they are new to the online learning environment or new to the Blackboard Learning Management System. Students can watch informational videos and then take the Student Orientation Quiz to help determine if they are ready to proceed in the online course(s). This quiz is for the student's benefit and does not count as a course grade. The quiz needs to be completed only once, not within each course.

If you have any trouble with this information or BLS, you can contact your instructor or the MHCA Executive Director. If you are in the Fort Smith area, you can set up an appointment with the Executive Director who can meet with you to help you navigate the BLS classroom.

ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments should be submitted on date specified on the specific course calendar. All assignments must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. central time (CST) via Blackboard on the due date. Attachments (if necessary) must be in .docx, .pdf, or .rtf format. Formal written assignments are to be prepared in a scholarly manner (typed, double-spaced, appropriate grammar, syntax, and APA format).

The grading criterion for each assignment is posted in the course content of the Blackboard course shell. Each assignment is graded according to the posted grading rubric for the assignment. Rubrics are posted under the Course Content link. Students should refer to the UA Fort Smith Academic Honesty policy (as listed in the *Graduate Studies Catalog*) prior to submission of assignments. Faculty may require students to submit assignments through SafeAssign for plagiarism checks.

CHALLENGING A POSTED ASSIGNMENT GRADE

Students have 7 days (including weekend days and holidays) to challenge a posted assignment grade. The student must discuss the matter with the course instructor **first**. If the student feels the matter is unresolved, the student must follow the general guidelines described in the Grievance and Appeal Process section of this handbook. Evidence is required to justify proceeding with the challenge process.

LATE POLICY

Students are responsible for all material and must follow the specific course outline/calendar and complete course work by the assigned dates for that course. Assignments are graded according to the assignment's specific rubric and submitting an assignment late results in point deductions as identified in each course syllabus. Late discussion postings impact the quality and quantity of class discussions and often forfeit the opportunity for valuable peer feedback.

EMERGENCY EVENT OR EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCE

If a student anticipates missing a deadline due to an emergency event or extenuating circumstance, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the course faculty **PRIOR to the due date**, if possible, to make arrangements for an extension to the due date for submission of the required assignment(s). An extension **may** or **may not** be granted. Overdue assignments **may** or **may not** be accepted **with** or **without** penalty.

PROGRAM RE-ENTRY/CONTINUATION

If for any reason whatsoever a student drops, is dismissed, or does not complete a course in progress, the student is solely responsible for withdrawing from the class, this includes notifying the Registrar's Office (479-788-7230 or records@uafs.edu) and completing any paperwork. Students who withdraw are expected to do so within the timeframes posted in the Graduate Calendar on the Graduate Studies website (http://academics.uafs.edu/sites/academics.uafs.edu/files/Departments/Academics/Graduate_Calendar.pdf).

Reasons for Withdrawal and Course of Action

- *Extenuating Circumstances* – Documentation needed to re-enter the program and if availability of space in the course allows.
- *Poor Grades (Not on Academic Probation or Provisional Admittance)*
 1. Before last drop date – One more course attempt and if availability of space in the course allows.
 2. After last drop date – Student can either continue in the course and try to make a passing grade (80% C) in the course or the grade earned is grade received.
 3. Student on academic probation or provisional admittance – If student fails to meet the criteria set further for academic good standing or removal of provisional admittance as stated in their acceptance letter, the student can finish the current semester or withdraw from the MHCA program. However, the student will be ineligible for continuation in the MHCA program.
- *Other Issues* – Documentation needed to re-enter the program and if availability of space in the course allows.

Withdrawal from Course(s)

A student who withdraws from a course for any reason is allowed one more attempt in the course. A student may re-enter/re-take the course the next time it is offered pending eligibility of the student and availability of space in the course. If a student then fails the second attempt, the student will be ineligible for continuation in the MHCA program.

Exit/Withdrawal from Program

The following statements apply to students who withdraw or discontinue the MHCA program for any reason.

- 1) The student must follow the re-entry/continuation guidelines.
- 2) The student's request for continuation in the MHCA program will be reviewed by the MHCA Executive Director to determine if the student is eligible to re-enter/continue the program.
- 3) The student is responsible for completing the required paperwork, including the Exit/Withdrawal Survey.
- 4) The student will receive the grade earned in the course if the student fails to withdraw before the last drop date on the Graduate Calendar for that semester.
- 5) Re-entry/continuation will also be dependent upon space availability in the class(es) the student needs to retake.

Re-entry and Continuation Guidelines

Students desiring re-entry into the MHCA program must schedule an appointment with the MHCA Executive Director, either in person or by telephone, to discuss student eligibility. The student must provide documentation detailing what has been done to facilitate their academic success if allowed to continue in the program. The Executive Director will evaluate the student's reasons for withdrawal along with the pertinent facts of the student's previous performance and skill level. Following review, the student will be notified of their re-entry status.

The following guidelines apply:

1. The length of time between withdrawing from the program and re-entry/continuation may not exceed one year.
2. A student permitted re-entry to or continuation in the program would begin with the course(s) he/she was taking when withdrawal occurred if availability of space in the course allows.
3. Re-entry or continuation in the program may or may not have specific conditions or criteria that must be met or maintained by the student. If these conditions are not maintained, the student will be ineligible for continuation in the MHCA program.

MEETING THE CRITERIA FOR RE-ENTRY DOES NOT GUARANTEE RE-ENTRY.

GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL PROCESSES

GRIEVANCE PROCESSES

All students of UAFS are guaranteed procedural or due process rights, including the right to pursue investigation through informal and formal grievance processes. Grievance procedures must not be requested frivolously and should follow the correct sequence outlined below. Copies of all correspondence will be maintained in the student’s program personal file.

The “chain-of-command” is diagrammed as:



INFORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCESS

The informal grievance process should be the first method utilized to rectify any issues a student has specific to the MHCA program. Contact within each link of the “chain-of-command” must be made within three (3) days of the perceived issue and/or decision. Failure to act within the time period disqualifies the student from pursuing the matter.

The following general guidelines should be used by students and program personnel when dealing with perceived issues:

1. Attempt to resolve the issue with the instructor first.
2. If the issue is not resolved with the instructor, the student must schedule a conference with the MHCA Executive Director.
3. If resolution is not obtained with the MHCA Executive Director, the student must follow the formal grievance process.
4. Copies of all correspondence will be maintained in the student’s program personal file.

FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCESS

The formal grievance process is used when informal procedures have been exhausted with no satisfactory resolution. For a formal hearing, the student must submit a request, in writing, to the Dean

of the College of Health Sciences within three (3) days of the conference with the MHCA Executive Director. The request must contain:

1. The specific grievance of the student
2. The date(s) relevant to the grievance
3. Name(s) of person(s) involved
4. Measures taken by the student to rectify the particular incident being grieved
5. Any other pertinent information and/or documentation
6. Student contact information, including email and phone number

The dean will review the formal request to determine its merit and to ensure all avenues for resolution have been exhausted by the student. An answer/decision will be issued to the student in writing within seven (7) business days of receiving the formal grievance review request. If the student wishes to pursue the matter further, he or she must follow the Appeal Process.

APPEAL PROCESS

Students may appeal program and policy decisions. A letter of petition clearly stating the reason for the appeal must be addressed to the Graduate Appeals Committee, c/o the Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs. The appeal must be received within 7 business days from notification of the decision(s).

FINAL GRADE PETITIONING

A student who believes an error has been made in the assignment of a final grade must first contact the faculty member to resolve the issue(s). The student must initiate contact no later than the first week of the next term. Should the student remain dissatisfied, he or she may appeal to the MHCA Executive Director and then to the Dean of the College of Health Sciences. If the dean disagrees with the prior responses, the dean will refer the matter to the Graduate Appeals Committee. Failure to act within the specified time period disqualifies the student from further pursuit of the matter. Refer to the *Graduate Studies Catalog* (<http://academics.uafs.edu/academics/graduate-studies-catalog-and-forms>) for more information.

HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATION CERTIFICATION and LICENSURE

There are a variety of board certifications and other certifications available for those employed in healthcare administration. Certification in healthcare administration is not required for employment upon graduation. Though not required, certification within the field will provide graduates a competitive edge when seeking employment. Certification ensures employers that you have the knowledge, skills and confidence to succeed while validating your proficiency and commitment to the profession and industry. Which certification(s) you choose should be based on your interests, career path, and employment requirements.

The following organizations provide certifications and licensures to those in healthcare administration:

American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE)

<http://www.ache.org/membership/credentialing/steps.cfm>

ACHE offers board certification as a Fellow (designated as FACHE), which is widely recognized and respected in the healthcare field. You do not have to meet all of the requirements below (such as three years of ACHE tenure or five years of healthcare management experience) to be eligible to submit an application.

Completing the Fellow Requirements at a Glance:

- Be a Member of ACHE (3 years)
- Hold a Master's or other advanced degree (transcript required)
- Hold a healthcare management position and have a minimum of two years of healthcare management experience
- Three references from current Fellows (one of which must be a structured interview)
- Provide a copy of your current job description, organizational chart, and resume
- Submit a Fellow Application (\$250 fee)

Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS)

<http://www.himss.org/health-it-certification>

- CAHIMS (Certified Associate in Healthcare Information and Management Systems) is designed for emerging professionals who may or may not have experience within the industry. CAHIMS is designed to be a pathway for careers in health IT.
- CPHIMS (Certified Professional in Healthcare Information and Management Systems) is a professional certification program for experienced healthcare information and management systems professionals.

College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME)

<https://chimecentral.org/chcio/>

- CHCIO (Certified Healthcare Chief Information Officer) is the first certification program exclusively for CIOs and IT executives in the healthcare industry. A CHCIO demonstrates the commitment, knowledge and experience required to master the core skills inherent to successful healthcare CIOs and IT executives. CHIME members who have been in a healthcare CIO or equivalent position for at least three years and want to enhance their professional stature are eligible to become certified.

Medical Group Management Association (MGMA)

<http://www.mgma.com/education-certification/acmpe-overview>

- CMPE (Certified Medical Practice Executive) confirms your expertise and brings greater recognition from physicians, executives, industry professionals and peers.

- FACMPE (Fellowship in the American College of Medical Practice Executives) designates board certification through ACMPE and is designed for individuals with at least two years of experience in healthcare management.

American Association of Healthcare Administrative Management

(<http://www.aaham.org/>; <http://www.aaham.org/Certification.aspx>)

AAHAM offers a variety of certification options, including:

- Certified Revenue Cycle Executive (CRCE). Available to National AAHAM members, in good standing. Candidates must have a minimum of either four (4) years of healthcare experience or two (2) years of healthcare experience and a two-year college or university associate's degree.
- Certified Revenue Cycle Professional (CRCP). Available to National AAHAM members, in good standing. Candidates must have a minimum of either two (2) years of healthcare experience or a two-year college or university associate's degree.
- Certified Revenue Integrity Professional (CRIP). Available to National AAHAM members, in good standing. Candidates must have a minimum of either two (2) years of healthcare experience or a two-year college or university associate's degree.
- Certified Revenue Cycle Specialist (CRCS). Available to individuals involved in the management of healthcare patient accounts. Membership in AAHAM is not a requirement, although it is encouraged. One-year employment in patient accounting is recommended to successfully complete the exam.
- Certified Compliance Technician (CCT). Available to anyone involved in healthcare compliance. Membership in AAHAM is not a requirement, although it is encouraged. One-year employment in healthcare compliance is recommended to successfully complete the exam.

Health Care Administrators Association

(<http://www.hcaa.org/?CSFS>)

- Certified Self-Funding Specialist (CSFS). The courses and certification are focused on the self-funded benefit model and its associated ERISA framework.

National Association of Long Term Care Administrator Boards (NAB)

(<http://www.nabweb.org/nursing-home-administrators-licensure-requirements>)

NAB is the nation's leading authority on licensing, credentialing, and regulating administrators of organizations along the continuum of long term care. Please note that licensure is required for long term care/nursing home administrators due to federal funding regulations. Licensure regulations for long term care/nursing home administrators vary state to state. The organization offers the following licensure exams:

- NHA (Nursing Home Administrator)
- RC/AL (Residential Care/Assisted Living)