

## **Appalachian State University – Beaver College of Health Sciences Master of Health Administration Program Admission & Retention Policies**

The Master of Health Administration (MHA) Program is a professional degree program with explicit requirements for admission and retention. To be admitted to the MHA program, students must meet the academic standards of Appalachian State University's ("Appalachian") [Cratis D. Williams Graduate School of Graduate Studies](#)<sup>1</sup> and the [Beaver College of Health Sciences](#)<sup>2</sup>. Students are also expected to abide by Appalachian's [Code of Student Conduct](#)<sup>3</sup> and [Academic Integrity Code](#)<sup>4</sup>, and must comply with all applicable university and college policies and procedures. Failure to meet these standards may result in dismissal from the MHA program. The standards are more fully described on the university's [webpage](#)<sup>5</sup>.

Appalachian State University's Cratis D. Williams Graduate School of Graduate Studies requires applicants to have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university and earned a 2.75 overall grade point average OR a 2.5 overall grade point average in the last earned degree and official scores at the 25th percentile level from the GRE or GMAT. Applicants must also complete the graduate application and pay the fee required by the Graduate School.

### **Admission to the MHA Program**

In addition to the criteria above established by the Graduate School and the Beaver College of Health Sciences (BCHS), the MHA Program has developed specific criteria for admission that are consistent with the program's mission and goals. Full-time employment in a health care setting is required, and preference is given to applicants with at least two years of experience. The required application materials are listed below and detailed on the MHA Program [website](#).

- Completed online [application to the Graduate School](#)<sup>1</sup>
- Resume (providing proof of full-time employment in a health care setting)
- Official (sealed) transcript(s) from each college or university attended (other than Appalachian State University)
- Application fee
- Personal statement including career goals and personal experience in health care (if applying to MHA/MBA dual degree program, applicants must provide a personal statement for each program)
- Two letters of reference pertaining to academic ability, professional competence and personal character
- If the undergraduate GPA is less than 2.75, GRE/GMAT test scores no older than 3 years are required for admission consideration

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bulletin.appstate.edu/index.php?catoid=33>

<sup>2</sup> <https://healthsciences.appstate.edu/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://studentconduct.appstate.edu/student-information>

<sup>4</sup> <https://academicintegrity.appstate.edu/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://distance.appstate.edu/programs/id/health-administration-mh>

Minimum admissions requirements include (Note: These are minimum requirements. Meeting minimum requirements does not guarantee acceptance):

- Minimum 2.75 overall GPA in last earned degree. GRE scores and/or an interview with the program director are required for candidates with less than a 2.75 GPA.
- A baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university
- A completed Application Package (noted in the previous section)
- Full-time employment experience

Admission into the MHA is competitive, and applications are evaluated based on the entire application package. A strong applicant has at least a 3.0 overall GPA, demonstrated leadership experience, and evidence of two years or more of full-time employment in a healthcare setting.

### **Academic Policies Academic Standards for Retention in the MHA Program**

In order to meet our responsibilities to provide quality professional education and to ensure that our MHA graduates are able to function in a broad variety of professional situations, the Health Care Management program has set forth standards for students in the MHA Program.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://graduate.appstate.edu/sites/graduate.appstate.edu/files/entrance\\_exam\\_waiver\\_form\\_0.pdf](https://graduate.appstate.edu/sites/graduate.appstate.edu/files/entrance_exam_waiver_form_0.pdf)

MHA students must maintain the academic standards for retention set forth by Appalachian State University, [Graduate School Bulletin](#)<sup>1</sup>. MHA students are expected to abide by Appalachian's [Code of Student Conduct](#)<sup>3</sup> and [Academic Integrity Code](#)<sup>4</sup>, and must comply with all applicable university and college policies and procedures. MHA students also must comply with the [American College of Healthcare Executive's Code of Ethics](#)<sup>7\*</sup>, and the following program standards: 1) Scholastic Performance; 2) Professionalism; 3) Ethical Behavior; 4) Interpersonal Relationships; and 5) Commitment to Inclusiveness and Equity. Failure to meet the standards may result in dismissal from the program. The standards are delineated below, the expectations are illustrative not exhaustive.

#### 1. Scholastic Performance Standards.

Maintain a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 or higher;

Must repeat courses in which the final grade is below a C-;

Dismissed from the program if they earn more than 3 C level grades; and

All courses with a grade of "F" or "U" must be repeated.

#### 2. Professionalism Standards.

Function within the structure of the University, College, and Department including:

Abiding by established policies and processes;

Meeting deadlines; providing documentation as requested;

Completing required in-class and out-of-class assignments;

Being prepared for and attending class; and

Communicating respectfully and appropriately with faculty, staff, fellow students and others.

#### 3. Ethical Behavior Standards.

Act in ways that will merit the trust, confidence, and respect of others;

Lead lives that embody an exemplary system of values and ethics;

Make decisions and take actions that reflect personal integrity and ethical leadership;

Conduct activities with honesty, integrity, respect, fairness and good faith in a manner that will reflect well upon the healthcare management profession;

Maintain competence and proficiency in health care management by implementing a personal program of assessment and continuing professional education.

#### 4. Interpersonal Relationships Standards.

Interact with others, including peers, faculty, administrators, and community members with integrity, cooperation, and respect, to build and maintain effective working relationships; and

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\*MHA students are engaged in an academic program that will prepare them for professional activity. Appalachian's MHA program identifies with the core values of the American College of Healthcare Executives, including its Code of Ethics and professional standards. References to the ACHE Code of Ethics and other standards will be modified as appropriate to apply to MHA students who are not yet executives but are advancing their profession.

<sup>1</sup> <https://graduate.appstate.edu/prospective-students>

<sup>3</sup> <https://studentconduct.appstate.edu/student-information>

<sup>4</sup> <https://academicintegrity.appstate.edu/>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.ache.org/abt\\_ache/code.cfm](https://www.ache.org/abt_ache/code.cfm)

demonstrate interpersonal skills that facilitate forming and sustaining effective helping relationships.

#### 5. Commitment to Inclusiveness and Equity.

Foster an inclusive environment and recognize the contributions of all members;

Encourage open dialogue to increase understanding, awareness, and improved decision-making;

Demonstrate respect for all people.

### **Academic Performance Concerns**

Students in the MHA program are first and foremost Appalachian State University students. Therefore, they must adhere to the academic standards and performance standards set forth by the University for all students. According to the Appalachian State University Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity Code, “When students enter the University, they assume obligations of performance and behavior relevant to the University’s mission, processes, and functions. These expectations of students in an academic community are higher than those expected of other citizens.” Violations of the performance standards set forth by the university, including violations of the [Academic Integrity Code](#)<sup>4</sup>, will be referred to the [Office of Student Conduct](#)<sup>3</sup>. Please note that alleged threat or harassment complaints must be handled according to [university procedures](#)<sup>3</sup>. Further, students who fail to maintain the University’s scholastic requirements are subject to academic probation or dismissal as indicated in the Appalachian State University Graduate Bulletin: [Graduate Bulletin Academic Policies](#)<sup>8</sup>. Additional review may also be undertaken that will follow the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook by the Department of Nutrition and Health Care Management and MHA program.

Because the MHA program is a professional program, MHA students must also adhere to the specific Academic Performance Standards set forth by the MHA Program. The MHA Program’s Academic Performance Standards and expectations of professional behaviors for each standard were developed to ensure clarity of expectations for behavior and achievement and to ensure that students from our program are well-suited for the professional demands, roles, and responsibilities of health care leaders. The MHA Program’s Academic Performance Standards and expectations of professional behaviors are the first step towards the development of specific competencies. The MHA Program has identified the following competencies as the basis for its curriculum, course content, learning objectives, and teaching and assessment methods:

1. Knowledge of the health-sector and health care management
2. Communications and interpersonal effectiveness
3. Critical thinking, analysis, and problem solving
4. Management and leadership
5. Professionalism and ethics

Competency development is an ongoing process, beginning with a basic level and understanding, then progressing towards greater knowledge and skills with a goal of advanced competence late in one’s career. Therefore, academic performance expectations will follow this developmental sequence, with increasing competency expected over time.

Student academic performance is monitored throughout the MHA Program. When concerns are noted in any of the areas outlined in the Academic Performance Standards for Retention, the Department will utilize the policies and procedures outlined in the following paragraphs. The severity of the concern will influence the level of intervention and steps followed.

1. When a minor academic, behavioral, or professional concern is identified the following steps are strongly recommended.
  - a. At a minimum, the faculty member or other supervisor/evaluator will meet with the student to discuss the concern.
  - b. An informal resolution will include written documentation of the concern and resolution, and may include the student's voluntary, signed agreement to take certain steps to address the concern.
  - c. If a student requests a reasonable accommodation in order to satisfy the required Professional Behaviors, the student will be referred to the [Office of Access and Equity: Disability Resources](#)<sup>9</sup> (ODR). If ODR determines that reasonable accommodations should be approved, University and student records will be updated as appropriate to reflect that determination.
  - d. A copy of the informal resolution documentation will be provided to the MHA Program Director.
  - e. If the Faculty member and the student are not able to resolve the concerns informally, or if the MHA Program Director, upon receipt of documentation, determines that consideration by Health Care Management faculty (HCM) and the Departmental Chair is appropriate. The MHA Program Director will convene a meeting with the Department Chair to identify two HCM faculty to consider the academic, behavioral, or professional concerns.

Policies will be consistent with the [Appalachian State University's Division of Student Affairs Academic Integrity Policies](#)<sup>4</sup>. If the MHA Program Director convenes a meeting of the HCM Faculty to consider an academic, behavioral, or professional behavior concern, the following procedures will govern. At minimum, this meeting will include the MHA Program Director, two tenured HCM faculty and the Department Chair.

- a. The MHA Program Director will convene the meeting as promptly as reasonably possible.
  - i. If the MHA Program Director initiates a review or if there is another conflict of interest, another HCM Faculty member will be designated to chair the review meeting. The term "Chair" as used in these procedures shall refer to the MHA Program Director or another HCM Faculty member designated to chair the review meeting.
  - ii. The Chair will notify the student of the meeting via email. Unless unusual circumstances require otherwise, the student will be provided notice at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. The notice to the student will include the following:

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<sup>3</sup> <https://studentconduct.appstate.edu/student-information>

<sup>4</sup> <https://academicintegrity.appstate.edu/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://bulletin.appstate.edu/content.php?catoid=7&navoid=292>

<sup>9</sup> <https://odr.appstate.edu/>

1. Date, time, and location of the meeting (or that a virtual meeting will be held).
  2. A copy of the documented professional behavior concern.
  3. A copy of this Policy.
  4. A statement that the student's rights include, among other things, the student's right to speak on his or her own behalf, the right to be accompanied by a non-attorney support person, the right to present information, and the right to ask others (but not an attorney) to speak on the student's behalf.
- b. The Chair will preside over the meeting and is responsible for ensuring an orderly, fair, and efficient process to consider the concerns is adhered to. The formal rules of evidence do not apply and the Chair may decide whether testimony and/or documents would help the HCM faculty and the Chair to reach a considered, informed resolution.
  - c. The student may be accompanied by a support person. The support person may not be an attorney or be called upon to provide factual information at the hearing. The support person shall not be permitted to speak or to take any active role in the meeting. The student must provide the name of the support person to the Chair at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.
  - d. The faculty member who prepared the written warning will present the concerns and the student will have an opportunity to speak on his or her behalf. HCM faculty members (including the Chair) may ask questions of the concerned faculty member and the student.
  - e. If the Chair believes it would be helpful to a fair consideration of the concerns, the Chair may request or permit other individuals to speak and/or present information at this meeting. The faculty member and the student also will have an opportunity to ask questions of such individuals. An individual who presents information pursuant to this section may not also serve as a support person.
  - f. After the presentation of testimony and documents is complete, the student (and, if applicable, the student's support person) will be excused.
  - g. If the student has been notified of the meeting but refuses to or does not attend, the meeting will be conducted in the student's absence.

The HCM faculty will consider the academic, behavioral, or professional review and all information presented at the meeting to determine whether the concerns raised have merit.

- a. The Department Chair may be present for deliberations to observe and hear first-hand the impressions and thinking of faculty members.
- b. The Department Chair shall not be present when the HCM faculty prepares its recommendations.
- c. The HCM faculty will submit its recommendation(s) in writing to the Department Chair indicating the faculty's assessment and any recommended consequences within three business days following the meeting, although that time may be extended if required by unusual circumstances.

Possible actions available to the HCM faculty include but are not limited to the items a-h below. The HCM faculty may consult with appropriate University and Department personnel to determine their recommended course of action to the Department Chair.

- a) Gather more information which may include contact with the student, faculty members, agency, or others;
- b) Conduct a meeting to resolve issues;
- c) Develop a written performance contract;
- d) Remove the student from the course;
- e) Referral for counseling
- f) Referral to the Office of the Dean of Students and/or the Office of Student Conduct
- g) Suspend/dismiss the student
- h) Other actions deemed appropriate by the HCM faculty

Upon receipt of the HCM Faculty's written recommendation, the Department Chair will consider all relevant information, determine whether the student has violated academic, behavioral, or professional behaviors and, if so, decide what consequences are appropriate along with the measures and timeline for follow-up. The Department Chair will communicate this decision to the student via email, ordinarily within 10 business days following receipt of the HCM faculty's recommendation. That time period may be extended based on extenuating circumstances.

Any active criminal charge or criminal conviction or active or substantiated violation of the Student Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity Code must be reported to the MHA Program Director or Department Chair. Failure to meet these reporting requirements may result in an Academic Performance Review and/or dismissal from the MHA Program.

Violence or threat of harm to any human being, cheating, or documented instances of plagiarism may result in immediate dismissal from the MHA Program. Engaging in conduct that results in dismissal from a course in the MHA Program may also result in immediate dismissal from the MHA Program. Any other actions required by law and/or University policy will also be taken.

Although every effort is made to identify and positively address student concerns as early as possible, the Department may conduct a review, or take other appropriate action, at any time to address concerns, even if the relevant issues arise late in the student's final semester. Concerns related to student academic performance, behavior, or professionalism can delay awarding the MHA degree or lead to dismissal from the program.

#### Recordkeeping and Access to Records

- a. The Graduate Program Director will maintain records of concerns, professional behavior review documents, professional behavior review meetings, and appeals in each student's records.
- b. Copies of the Professional Behavior Review documents and any related decisions or documentation (including appeals) will be available for review by supervisors working for or on behalf of HCM and other professional personnel as needed.



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<sup>2</sup> <https://healthsciences.appstate.edu/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://edc.appstate.edu/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://ombuds.appstate.edu/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/resources/student-grievance-and-appeal-policies-and-procedures>

<sup>13</sup> [https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/sites/academicaffairs.appstate.edu/files/final\\_grade\\_appeal\\_enabled.pdf](https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/sites/academicaffairs.appstate.edu/files/final_grade_appeal_enabled.pdf)

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- <sup>4</sup> <https://academicintegrity.appstate.edu/>
- <sup>5</sup> <https://distance.appstate.edu/programs/id/health-administration-mha>
- <sup>6</sup> [https://graduate.appstate.edu/sites/graduate.appstate.edu/files/entrance\\_exam\\_waiver\\_form\\_0.pdf](https://graduate.appstate.edu/sites/graduate.appstate.edu/files/entrance_exam_waiver_form_0.pdf)
- <sup>7</sup> [https://www.ache.org/abt\\_ache/code.cfm](https://www.ache.org/abt_ache/code.cfm)
- <sup>8</sup> <http://bulletin.appstate.edu/content.php?catoid=7&navoid=292>
- <sup>9</sup> <https://odr.appstate.edu/>
- <sup>10</sup> <https://edc.appstate.edu/>
- <sup>11</sup> <http://ombuds.appstate.edu/>
- <sup>12</sup> <http://bulletin.appstate.edu/content.php?catoid=7&navoid=294#suspension-and-dismissal>

**Acknowledgements:**

MHA Program Academic Concerns Policy and Academic Performance Review Procedures adopted in this policy are based on the Appalachian State University MSW & Graduate Nutrition Program Policies.