

# Why You Should Do a Fellowship in Administration

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**W**hen I graduated residency, about a third of my class went into the community, a third stayed in academic practice, and another third went on to do a fellowship. Since then, the number of residency graduates pursuing fellowship positions has been rising, with 2020 showing a 5% increase compared to 2019.<sup>1</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic may be contributing to increased interest in fellowships, as the job market for emergency medicine is facing cutbacks.<sup>2</sup> When I was deciding on whether or not to complete a fellowship, I considered the salary offered,

clinical time, scholarly productivity expectations, opportunities for moonlighting, and career goals. Ultimately, I decided to pursue a fellowship in ED administration, knowing that

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fellowships offer an opportunity to develop an area of interest within emergency medicine and subsequently allow for a competitive edge when applying for post-fellowship positions. And, I’m glad I did.

During my two years as an administrative fellow, I was exposed to wide variety of topics. Regular didactics included lectures and discussions with the fellowship directors, other faculty members, hospital administrators, and our department chair. Subjects included staffing models, utilization management, marketing, department budgeting, addressing patient grievances, coaching, management styles, and more. One session even included a mock contract negotiation between an employer and a job applicant. During the fellowship, I was able to apply these skills practically while serving as an assistant director of clinical operations for one of our clinical sites. This was an incredibly valuable experience,

since I could gain leadership skills while honing my clinical skills as a new attending. While I found that, in residency, I developed the skills necessary to manage emergencies of all varieties, I had not received

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any training in managing people. Knowing how to optimally interact with your team members really allows you to provide the best care possible. Furthermore, understanding how different people operate allows you to effectively implement new tools and procedures to improve the clinical environment for both patients and providers.

Fellowships are additionally conducive to obtaining other advanced degrees, as the clinical load is less than a full-time position. I had the opportunity to earn my Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree during my administrative fellowship. While I had never considered getting an MBA before, it’s something I’m glad I did now. As someone who had previously taken mostly science classes, an education in business and financial concepts was completely new to me, but it was also something many of my peers had no experience in, making it advantageous. In addition to emergency medicine administration, I found that an MBA can be broadly applicable to suit any career path because the skills you learn are universal. I applied business models and theories learned in each course, well beyond budgets and business statistics, to projects I worked on in the emergency department. For instance, a risk management class introduced me to the concept of ‘risk maps,’ which are used

to identify and prioritize opportunities to address risk associated with an organization or business.<sup>3</sup> During the fellowship, our department leaders completed our own risk map to pinpoint operational projects to decrease risk to patients and staff.

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The fellowship and MBA completely prepared me for my current position,

which is to serve as a liaison between the emergency department and other services in the hospital. Exposure to financial and operational challenges during the fellowship allowed me to expand my mindset and better understand the emergency department, the people within it, and how it functions within the hospital system. I continually apply the concepts I learned to improve the coordination and quality of care provided to patients.

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In summary, an administrative fellowship offers a unique experience to build your career, expand your knowledge base, and develop leadership skills. After completing the fellowship and MBA, I was able to advance my career by obtaining an administrative role right after graduation. If you aren't already, I encourage you to consider this widely applicable opportunity after residency. ●

#### Resources:

1. "Press Release: NRMP Report: 2020 Appt Year Is Largest For Fellowship Matches." 2020-2021. *National Resident Matching Program*. Available at: <https://www.nrmp.org/nrmp-report-shows-2018-appointment-year-fellowship-matches-record-high-2-2/>.

2. Guarino, B. "Young ER doctors risk their lives on the pandemic's front lines. But they struggle to find jobs." Jan. 20201. *The Washington Post*. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/01/04/er-doctors-covid-jobs/>.
3. "Conducting a Risk Assessment." *Harvard Financial Administration Risk Management and Audit Services*. Available at: [https://rmas.fad.harvard.edu/files/rmas/files/conducting\\_a\\_risk\\_assessment\\_guidance.pdf?m=1563824449](https://rmas.fad.harvard.edu/files/rmas/files/conducting_a_risk_assessment_guidance.pdf?m=1563824449).



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