

2019 NCAF Updated Policy FAQ's-Fellowship Sites

What is NCAF, and why was it founded?

Although administrative fellowships have been around for decades, the lack of coordination and absence of uniform approaches created significant difficulties across the entire process, including:

- A “free for all” approach to the recruiting process, in which fellowships felt pitted against one another to get to students first
- A “no standardization” application process, creating significant additional work for students, program directors, and other letter-writers
- “Exploding offers,” undermining applicants’ ability to make fully-informed decisions
- A “buyer beware” absence of quality standards regarding fellows’ onboarding, learning, and post-fellowship transitions

The National Council on Administrative Fellowships (NCAF) was created to address all of these challenges—enhance the experience, increase the effectiveness, and improve the quality level—to a level the health management profession needs and deserves. NCAF is a voluntary membership organization in which members abide by the Code of Good Practice that outlines the responsibilities for administrative fellowship sites, graduate health management programs, and students. NCAF also provides administrative fellowship sites the ability to access a national talent pipeline, in an easy, standardized, and coordinated manner, while bringing graduate health management programs to the table to share ideas, best practices, and expectations that allow for preparation of students for administrative fellowships.

The 2019 Code of Good Practice can be found [here](#). As the policies have been updated for the upcoming cycle, below are FAQ's to help direct you better. Should you have additional questions please contact Nitasha Kassam, NCAF Program Coordinator at nkassam@nchl.org.

What are the NAFCAS 2019 dates?

NAFCAS will have two cycles this year.

NAFCAS Cycle 1 will be open from Wednesday, June 12-Wednesday, October 2, 2019

NAFCAS Cycle 2 will be open from Monday, November 25, 2019-Friday, January 31, 2020

Note: Students should be sure to submit their applications in a timely manner as each site will have different interview and/or offer dates. Graduate program directors and faculty members who are asked to submit letters of recommendation should likewise do so in a timely manner.

When can fellowship sites start to interview applicants?

Every fellowship site is different. Fellowship sites may have multiple rounds of interviews, including telephonic, webinar, and/or onsite interviews.

Fellowship sites may start interviewing applicants as soon as applications start to come in, whereas other sites might choose to review applications in a batch after the application deadline. Fellowship sites can continually monitor the application status of applicants on NAFCAS to ensure all documentation is submitted.

Students should monitor their status on NAFCAS to ensure their application is in the “completed” or “verified” status.

To better understand the application statuses, please view the table below:

| Application Status | Definition |
|--------------------|--|
| In Progress | Program(s) selected, but application not paid for or submitted. |
| Received | Applicant has completed and submitted all required materials and payment has been received. However, graduate transcript(s) and/or letters of recommendation are not yet in NAFCAS. |
| Complete | Applicant has completed and submitted all required materials, payment has been received, graduate transcript(s) received and scanned by NAFCAS, and letters of recommendation uploaded by recommenders. This status is required by the deadline. |
| Verified | Applicant has completed and submitted all required materials, payment has been received, graduate transcript(s) received and scanned by NAFCAS, and letters of recommendation uploaded by recommenders. GPA verified. Applicant will only move into this status once the application is completed and GPA has been verified. |

When can fellowship sites start making offers to applicants?

Fellowship sites may start making formal, written offers to an applicant any time after the application deadline of October 2, 2019.

Note: Fellowship sites may not require the applicant to accept an offer until November 13, 2019, which is the official offer acceptance day. The following language can be included within the formal offer:

[Insert Fellowship Site Name] is a member of the National Council on Administrative Fellowships and we abide by their Code of Good Practice. As such, we are *not requiring you to accept this offer until the official offer acceptance day: **November 13, 2019 at Noon Central Time.*** Upon receipt of this offer, please confirm if you would like to accept, hold, or decline this offer. *Please note these options are intended to make the process more fair and efficient for everyone. Again, your options are:*

- *Accept this offer at any time before the official acceptance date*
- *Hold this offer with the understanding that **you will only hold one offer** during this process*
- *Decline this offer in a timely manner so that an offer can be extended to another outstanding applicant*

*Note: Applicants are not required to accept any offer until November 13, 2019, which is the official offer acceptance day; however, **you may only hold one offer at a time.***

Should administrative fellowship sites include a timeline and/or dates on the recruitment process on their NAFCAS page?

Yes, NCAF members will have the same application deadline of October 2, 2019 and official acceptance date of November 13, 2019. However, each administrative fellowship site may provide additional information about their onsite interview dates and expected offer dates on their NAFCAS page.

Fellowship Site: An offer has been made. Now What?

Once an offer is made, the administrative fellowship site should immediately update [NAFCAS](#) & [OPT-IN](#)¹ indicating the status of their applicants. This will be viewable only by the respective site and NCAF. This may include the following:

- Offer Made: Offer Accepted
- Offer Made: Offer Declined
- Offer Made: Offer On Hold

Note: It is important that fellowship sites update NAFCAS and OPT-IN on an ongoing basis so that NCAF can monitor the system to help ensure applicants do not hold more than one offer.

Applicant: I received an offer. What are my next steps?

Within 24 hours of receiving a written, formal offer from a fellowship site, confirm if you would like to accept, hold, or decline the offer. Should you choose to put this offer on hold, it will be yours to accept or decline anytime until November 13, 2019. ***You may only hold one offer at a time.***

Next steps include:

- If you choose to accept an offer, you should immediately withdraw from the applicant pool
- If you receive an offer and are not yet ready to make a decision, you may choose to put the offer on hold and continue to interview with other administrative fellowship sites
- If you receive an offer from a site you are no longer interested in, decline in a timely and professional manner and you may continue to interview with other administrative fellowship sites.
- If the student receives a subsequent offer, within 24 hours they must decline one offer and accept or hold the other
- Update their status in OPT-IN within 24 hours at every decision point

Note: The above steps are intended to make the process as fair and efficient for everyone as possible. The goal is to not create undue bottlenecks or burdens for the applicants or for the fellowship sites.

Applicants are expected to follow through interviewing at all the organizations where a commitment has been made, especially if travel and lodging has been prepaid. If an offer has been received that is the applicant's first choice, they should communicate in good faith with any sites where an interview commitment has been made regarding next steps and consult with their graduate program director for further direction.

¹ OPT-IN will be available for use on October 3, 2019. Access information will be provided to all NAFCAS applicants and NCAF fellowship sites separately.

Applicant: I have put an offer on hold. What are my next steps?

The applicant may continue to interview with other fellowship sites and rank order their preferences. Applicants should behave professionally and ensure they communicate as needed. It is important to not feel pressured when making a decision and to follow through interviewing at all the organizations where a commitment has been made. Additionally, it is important to update their status in OPT-IN in a timely manner and work with their graduate program director to help navigate this process.

Once the applicant has made a decision on the offer, they must do the following within 24 hours:

- Contact the fellowship site directly to accept, hold, or decline
- Update your status in OPT-IN

The applicant may hold only **ONE** offer at a time. If they receive a subsequent offer, they must do the following within 24 hours:

- Accept one offer and decline the other
- Update your status in OPT-IN

What does “Offer On Hold” mean?

The applicant has received a formal offer, but is not yet ready to make a decision. The applicant can choose to put this offer on hold, allowing them to continue their interview process.

*Note: applicants can only hold **ONE** offer at a time. If a subsequent offer is received, the applicant must make the decision on which offer they will decline within 24-hours of receiving that offer.*

What does “Offer Accepted” mean?

The applicant has accepted an offer and will withdraw their application from all other fellowship sites.

What does “Offer Declined” mean?

The applicant has decided not to accept an offer. The administrative fellowship site is free to continue to making offers other applicant(s) that best fits their organization’s needs.

How long can an applicant put an offer on hold?

Prior to November 13, 2019, applicants are allowed to put an offer on hold from the time it is received until November 13 at Noon Central Time, the official acceptance day.

For offers made on or after November 13, the fellowship site must provide the applicant with a minimum of 24 hours to make their decision.

*Note: An applicant may only hold **ONE** offer at a time. If a subsequent offer is received, the applicant must make the decision to decline one offer within 24 hours.*

Can a fellowship site retract an offer that has been made?

A fellowship site may not retract a formal offer that has been made until after November 13 at Noon Central Time. Once an applicant places an offer on hold, it is important that they proactively update the fellowship site of any change in their status.

In the rare occasion when a fellowship site elects to close its fellowship program, the site should notify all applicants and is advised to reimburse all applicant fees.

When does the applicant have to accept an offer?

The applicant should accept or decline any offers before or on November 13 at Noon Central Time. Fellowships may elect to extend offers to alternate applicants for positions that have not been accepted by that time, or may choose to provide the applicant with additional time to make a decision.

What happens if an applicant decides to decline the offer on November 13?

If an applicant decides to decline the offer on November 13, the fellowship site should check the status of their next preferred applicant on OPT-IN. If the applicant is still available, the fellowship site can reach out to them with a formal offer. The fellowship sites should update NAFCAS and OPT-IN accordingly.

If the fellowship site is unable to find an applicant that best fits their needs, they may decide to participate in NAFCAS Cycle 2 from November 25, 2019-January 31, 2020.

What if an offer is made on November 13, 2019?

For offers received on or after November 13th, the fellowship sites must provide the applicant with a minimum of 24 hours to make their decision.

*Note: **The applicant may only hold ONE offer at a time.** If subsequent offers are received, they must make the decision on which offer to decline.*

A fellowship site is not planning to interview and/or make offers until the official acceptance day. Will there still be applicants?

Yes, the demand for administrative fellowships far outweighs the supply of administrative fellowship positions available. NCAF data indicates on average seven applicants for every position available on NAFCAS. However, if a fellowship site is unable to find an applicant that best fits their organization's needs, they may choose to instead participate in NAFCAS Cycle 2 from November 25, 2019-January 31, 2020.

What is expected in terms of the onsite interview process?

Applicants may not always understand the resources expended by the fellowship site, both in terms of scheduling the executives' time and costs incurred for airfare and lodging. While some fellowship sites pay upfront for applicant's airfare and lodging to interview at their site, many fellowship sites may choose to provide reimbursement during or immediately after the applicant has attended the interview, which helps to ensure that the applicant takes advantage of the opportunity to interview and learn about the fellowship.

Applicants are expected to follow through interviewing at all the organizations where a commitment has been made, especially if travel and lodging has been prepaid. If an offer has been received that is the applicant's first choice, they should communicate in good faith with any sites where an interview commitment has been made regarding next steps and consult with their graduate program director for further direction.



If the fellowship site makes an offer on November 13, does the applicant still have 24-hours to make a decision?

Yes, applicants must be provided with a minimum of 24 hours to make their decision for any offers made on or after the official offer day of November 13.

*Note: Applicants can only hold **ONE** offer at a time. If a subsequent offer is received, the applicant must make the decision on which offer they will decline.*

Can fellowship sites reach out to an applicant once an offer is made?

Once an offer is made, fellowship sites should act professionally and in good faith to not formally or informally pressure applicants to accept an offer prior to November 13, 2019 at Noon Central Time.

Applicants are encouraged to act in a professional manner. This includes following through with all commitments and understanding that often fellowship sites have defined budgets for fellow salaries and benefits, which are often non-negotiable. It is important to not feel pressured when making a decision, and to follow through interviewing at all the organizations where a commitment has been made. Additionally, it is important that the applicant communicate with fellowship sites regarding any changes to their status and should update their OPT-IN status in a timely manner. Applicants should work with their graduate program director to help navigate this process.

Administrative fellowship sites and students can review their responsibilities [here](#). Should the fellowship site have questions or concerns about an applicant's status, they should reach out to NCAF.

What if a fellowship site does not fill a fellowship position or a student does not receive an offer?

NCAF offers NAFCAS Cycle 2 from November 25, 2019-January 31, 2020.

If I hear of any behavior that is counter to the intent of NCAF's Code or intended to undermine a fair process, what should I do? NCAF has developed a process over the years to seek out and inquiry about any issues or problems—intended or unintended—that may occur during the process. NCAF takes its role seriously to follow up, understand, inform, and resolve any issues that occur during the application, interview, and offer process. Hearsay and rumor are not considered credible unless they can be substantiated. Every fellowship site, graduate program, and applicant is responsible for reporting any problems or concerns in a timely manner to Nitasha Kassam at nkassam@nchl.org.

| | Application Period/ Deadline <small>(June 12-October 2, 2019)</small> | Interview & Offer Period <small>(October 2-November 13, 2019 Noon CT)</small> | Acceptance Day <small>(November 13, 2019)</small> | 2nd Round <small>(November 25, 2019-January 31, 2020)</small> |
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