

Application Advice

MCPHS Fellowship Application Important Dates:

Application portal is open October 19th-November 25th

Deadline for recommendation forms is December 4th

Application Materials

Your application is our first introduction to you. Many programs, including MCPHS, accept applications on a rolling basis, so it is better to apply earlier rather than closer to the deadline (but don't rush!). A couple general tips for application materials:

- Proofread materials yourself and **have someone else review your application materials** before you submit them!
- Submit every document (CV, Letter of Intent) as a PDF

Letter of Intent

Your letter of intent should tell us about you as a person and why you want to be here. The letter of intent should not just be a reiteration of your CV, but rather highlight pivotal experiences and how they shaped your career goals (not a summary of what you did there—that's on your CV!) as well as what you bring to the table. A general organization of the letter of intent should be:

- Express interest in the position
- Why you are interested in the company/program
- Why you would be a good fit for the position
- Summary of main points

In your cover letter, you should address these main questions:

- Why industry?
- Why this functional area?
- Why fellowship?
- Why this company and/or therapeutic area?
- Why this specific position?

While some programs differ, generally, it is a best practice to address the letter of intent to the fellowship director(s) for the position, which is in the company brochure. It is also helpful to use the same language/phrasing as the position description in the brochure. It is best to keep your letter of intent to **one page**; longer letters do not always provide us with any more valuable information, and main points can get lost. It is also a good idea to refer to the company's mission/vision statement and review company core values.

CV

CV organization is really a matter of opinion, so this is just a general guide; however, it is important to highlight your most relevant experiences by putting them at the top (tip: education and industry-related experiences should be first and second, respectively). Sections to include could be:

- Education
- Pharmaceutical Industry Experience (if applicable—any internships, jobs, and relevant APPEs here)
- Leadership Experience/Community Service
- Projects and Presentations (relevant presentations done during APPEs, internships, school, etc.)
- Publications/Posters
- Work Experience (other work experiences, i.e., community or hospital pharmacy intern positions)
- Completed APPEs
- Anticipated APPEs
- Honors and Awards

List experiences in reverse chronological order within each section.

Create a table and make the lines invisible for easy formatting and alignment.

We recommend your CV be no more than four (4) pages (if it is more than four pages, evaluate what is on your CV and how it adds value to your story). You should be able to speak to everything listed on your CV and how each experience makes you a strong candidate.

Recommendation Forms

For most, if not all, fellowship programs, you will need to provide contact information for references. These should be professional (ideally pharmacy-related) references; it is nice if they are industry professionals but by no means necessary. You should ask for recommendations from people you think can provide the strongest recommendation and who know you well enough to do so. It is also a good practice to ask if they would be willing to provide a recommendation well in advance of when you plan to apply (such as at the end of an APPE rotation if you plan to ask your APPE preceptor) rather than waiting until you are submitting your application.

For the MCPHS program, references only need to complete an online recommendation form, and do not need to write an actual recommendation letter. To apply, you only need to provide references' contact information; the actual forms need to be completed by December 4th.

Interviews

Please refer to MCPHS application instructions for the application process, which may be subject to change depending on the current COVID-19 pandemic. Each program, company and even each individual position has a slightly different application review and interview process and timeline. Interviews are generally 15-30 minutes and may consist of introductory/general fellowship questions, more situational questions to gain more insight into how you may fit in with the team, and time for you to ask questions at the end. It is important to come to these interviews prepared; practice mock interviews with friends, research the company pipeline, the mission, the values, and news, especially any pertaining to the functional area you are applying for; and of course, know your CV.

Interview Questions

Generally, interviews start with a few general questions, then more in-depth questions to get to know you better as a person (how you think, problem-solve, and how you may fit in with the team). When answering interview questions, it is important to highlight key experiences (internships, work experience, APPE) that have influenced you the most and how these experiences led you to pursue a fellowship. Similar to your cover letter, you should be able to clearly articulate why you are interested in industry, a fellowship, the functional area, and the specific position. For the more in-depth questions, make sure you have thought about key learning experiences and how they have shaped you as a person and as a professional—the best candidate is one who knows their strengths and is aware of areas for improvement.

At the end of each interview, there will be time for you to ask questions. This is your chance to gain a better understanding of the position, the company, the team you would be working with and the type of work you would be doing as a fellow. It is a good idea to come prepared with specific questions you are genuinely curious about as well as asking questions related directly to the conversation during the interview.

Finally, it is important to be mindful of time when answering questions—make sure not to spend more than a few minutes answering one question, so that we are able to learn as much about you and so that you have time to ask questions at the end.

Final Advice

Here are some final pieces of advice from current fellows, based on their experiences:

- *“For interviews that include presentations, try to present on an industry- or functional area-related topic. It’s even better if you have a presentation you’ve already done that is industry-related!”* – **Hannah, second year Regulatory Sciences fellow, Biogen**
- *“Interviewing for multiple companies can get a little hectic. It’s important you stay organized through the whole process, either by using an excel document, or other platforms. Interviews can stack on any given day, so staying organized will help reduce the anxiety of it all”* – **Arjun, second year Worldwide Medical fellow, Biogen**
- *“Get to know the fellows. Ask questions and seek mentors throughout the process. Fellows and former fellows are your most valuable source of information. Think like a future fellow; be your own best advocate, seek out what you want to know and ask questions to gain insight into what you don’t know.”* – **Nick, former Regulatory Advertising and Promotion fellow, Biogen**
- *“Be intentional about which functional area(s) and therapeutic area(s) you choose. You will need to articulate why both on paper and during interviews. The more interests you have, the more you will need to reflect to clearly articulate your reasoning.”* – **Melissa, second year Worldwide Medical fellow, Biogen**
- *“It is so important to research the companies prior to interviews. Look at the mission statement and values of the company, the product pipeline, and any recent press releases. As a candidate, this really helped me get a better sense of each company and the type of therapeutic areas I would be working with as a fellow there, as well as develop more meaningful and company-specific questions to ask during interviews. As an interviewer, the candidates that stood out to me clearly researched Biogen by referencing our mission statement and values and asking specific questions about the work that Biogen is doing.”* – **Hannah, second year Regulatory Sciences fellow, Biogen**