

MAKING THE CHOICE BETWEEN THE MS-HCA AND THE MPA WITH HEALTH CARE OPTION

The Department of Public Affairs and Administration offers two degrees for those interested in a career in health care – the Master of Science in Health Care Administration (MS-HCA) and the Master of Public Administration (MPA) with an option in health care administration. Although both degrees are excellent choices for those who want a career in health care, each degree program meets the needs of those with an interest in health care in substantially different ways.

In the MS-HCA program, the entire focus of the program is on the health care sector and all of the courses have a health care emphasis. For example, Health Care Financing and Budgeting is one of the required core courses in the MS-HCA program. That course covers the topics and issues that would typically be covered in any graduate-level finance course, but does so in the context of the health care sector. The course emphasis is on the application of financial concepts, skills, and techniques in health care organizations.

If you want the primary focus of your education to be on health care administration, the MS-HCA program would be a better choice for you. Another way of thinking about it is in terms of your career goals. If you have decided that your career will firmly be in the health care sector, either in for-profit, nonprofit, or public organizations, the MS-HCA program would be a better choice for you.

In the MPA with an option in health care administration, the majority of the courses focus on public administration and public service. With the health care administration option, four of the courses have a health care focus, and are the same courses that are offered in the MS-HCA program. If you want the primary focus of your education to be on public administration rather than purely on health care administration, the MPA with an option in health care administration would be a better choice for you. If you have an interest in health care administration, but wish to have that career primarily in government organizations at the federal, state, and local levels or organizations in the nonprofit sector, the MPA with an option in health care administration would be a better choice for you. The MPA with an option in health care administration would also be a better choice for you if you think that you may one day want to work in a non-health care related field, but still in the government or nonprofit sector.

If you would like to have additional information to help you make your decision, the Graduate Coordinator will be glad to help. Contact Prof. Michael Moon, michael.moon@csueastbay.edu, for MPA and Prof. Toni Fogarty, toni.fogarty@csueastbay.edu, for the MS HCA program.