

Tell me about yourself and why you're interested in healthcare administration.

How to answer:

Start with a brief educational and professional summary. Then connect your background to your motivation for pursuing healthcare administration. This isn't a biography, it's a pitch. Avoid rambling; focus on what brings you to this specific internship and why.

What they're looking for:

They want to understand your "why" and how your background aligns with their organization. A sense of purpose, clarity of goals, and a human connection to the field (e.g., a past experience in a hospital, family influence, or volunteer work) go a long way.

Example:

"I'm currently pursuing my MHA because I want to be part of shaping operational systems that improve patient care. After volunteering at a free clinic during undergrad, I realized how much back-end efficiency impacts front-line outcomes."

Why do you want to intern with our organization specifically?

How to answer:

Show you've done your homework. Mention something specific about the hospital/system like their mission, a recent expansion, a standout program, or a known culture of mentorship, and tie that to your values or goals.

What they're looking for:

Genuine interest. If you say, "because it's local," they'll know you haven't researched. They want interns who will invest effort, not just take up space.

Example:

"I'm especially drawn to your emphasis on rural health outreach. That aligns with my long-term goal to improve access in underserved areas."

What do you know about our hospital or healthcare system?

How to answer:

List 2–3 concrete facts about the organization, ideally recent and relevant. Then connect each fact to how it influenced your desire to intern there.

What they're looking for:

Candidates who are serious enough to research them. They're evaluating preparation and professionalism.

Example:

"I read your system was recognized by Becker's for patient safety. That tells me this is a place where process and outcomes both matter."

How do you handle working in a fast-paced or high-pressure environment?**How to answer:**

Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to describe a time you handled stress effectively. Show calm thinking, prioritization, and follow-through.

What they're looking for:

Composure, time management, and resilience, not perfection. Admitting it was hard but that you adapted is more authentic than saying it didn't affect you.

Example:

"During finals week, I was also coordinating a campus blood drive. I made a detailed schedule, delegated tasks, and stayed on track. Both were successful."

Describe a time when you worked on a team project. What was your role and what was the outcome?**How to answer:**

Talk about collaboration, not just your individual achievement. Clarify your role and how you supported the team's success.

What they're looking for:

Team players who communicate and contribute without dominating. Healthcare is team-based, and they want to know you can function in that environment.

How do you prioritize tasks when you have multiple deadlines to meet?**How to answer:**

Walk through your process: assess urgency, set timelines, use tools (like calendars), and stay flexible.

What they're looking for:

They want to hear structure, not chaos. If you say, "I just work faster," that won't cut it.

Can you describe a situation where you had to deal with a difficult colleague or customer?

How to answer:

Focus on your response, not the other person's flaws. Keep it professional, show empathy, and emphasize resolution.

What they're looking for:

Conflict management skills and emotional maturity. Can you stay respectful and constructive?

What are your long-term career goals in healthcare administration?

How to answer:

Be specific but realistic. If your end goal is CEO, that's fine, but walk them through your roadmap. Internships → Fellowship → Operational leadership, etc.

What they're looking for:

Ambition, alignment with the field, and clarity of direction.

How do you stay organized and ensure attention to detail?

How to answer:

Mention tools (project management apps, checklists), routines (daily planning), and habits that help you catch errors and meet deadlines.

What they're looking for:

Operational reliability. Can you manage your work in a hospital environment where mistakes have high stakes?

Describe a time when you had to learn something new quickly.

How to answer:

Show learning agility. Choose an example with a steep learning curve and how you got up to speed through research, asking for help, practicing, etc.

What they're looking for:

Adaptability and initiative, especially in ambiguous situations.

What leadership experience do you have, and how has it prepared you for this internship?

How to answer:

Think broadly such as club officer roles, class projects, or even job situations where you led without a title. Connect your actions to outcomes.

What they're looking for:

Ownership, initiative, and communication. Leadership isn't about titles; it's about influence and follow-through.

How would you handle a situation where you disagreed with a supervisor's decision?

How to answer:

Acknowledge their authority while respectfully explaining your perspective. Show tact and emotional intelligence.

What they're looking for:

Diplomacy, confidence, and professionalism; not defiance or blind obedience.

What do you think are the biggest challenges facing healthcare administrators today?

How to answer:

Mention 2–3 real issues like workforce shortages, rising costs, or health equity, and offer a brief thought on how leaders should address them.

What they're looking for:

Awareness of the industry landscape and critical thinking.

Tell us about a time you identified a process improvement opportunity.

How to answer:

Walk through the before-and-after. What was inefficient? What did you propose or change? What was the result?

What they're looking for:

Initiative, systems thinking, and the ability to drive small improvements with measurable impact.

What do you hope to gain from this internship experience?

How to answer:

Avoid clichés like “real-world experience.” Be specific. What departments you want to shadow, what skills you hope to build, etc.

What they’re looking for:

Clarity, intention, and alignment with what they can offer.

Describe a situation where you took initiative on a project or task.

How to answer:

Pick a time you went above what was asked without being prompted. Focus on the impact of your initiative.

What they’re looking for:

Self-starters who don’t wait to be told what to do.

Do you have any questions for us?

How to answer:

Always ask at least one. Examples:

- “What does a successful intern look like here?”
- “What opportunities are there to interact with leadership?”

Avoid questions you could Google.

What they’re looking for:

Engagement, curiosity, and preparation.

How do you handle constructive criticism, and can you give an example?

How to answer:

Share a time you were corrected and how you took it in stride, learned from it, and improved.

What they’re looking for:

Humility, growth mindset, and emotional intelligence.

Describe a time when you had to adapt to a significant change in the workplace or school.

How to answer:

Paint a clear before/after picture. Describe what changed, how it impacted you, how you responded, and what you learned.

What they're looking for:

Flexibility and openness to change, especially in fast-evolving systems like healthcare.

What role do you believe communication plays in healthcare administration?

How to answer:

Make the case that communication is the backbone of quality care such as between departments, to patients, in managing teams, etc.

What they're looking for:

An understanding that soft skills matter just as much as strategy.

Have you ever had to explain a complex idea to someone without a technical background?

How to answer:

Choose an example where you broke something complex into simple, relatable terms. Maybe explaining insurance to a patient or a system to a peer.

What they're looking for:

Clarity, empathy, and communication skills.

Discuss a time you and a co-worker had a disagreement. How did you resolve it?

How to answer:

Pick a professional, not personal, disagreement. Focus on listening, compromise, and collaboration; not "winning."

What they're looking for:

Conflict resolution and professionalism.