AUPHA Doctoral Student Essay Competition

The Association of University Programs in Health Administration (AUPHA) is pleased to sponsor a special Doctoral Student Essay Competition in Health Services, Healthcare Management, Leadership, and Policy. The purpose of the competition is to stimulate and demonstrate the ability of future scholars to identify, describe, and evaluate important issues relevant to the field of Health Services, Healthcare Management, Leadership, and Policy and the implications of these issues for both *management practice* and the *teaching* of the subject matter.

AUPHA invites eligible students to submit high-quality essays that focus on a topic related to Health Services, Healthcare Management, Leadership, and Policy. Submissions can be written as expository, descriptive, narrative or argumentative/persuasive essays, literature reviews, original research, or case studies.

Eligibility

- The competition is open to students currently enrolled in an AUPHA Doctoral Member Program in health services, healthcare management and leadership, health policy, or other related healthcare management and policy degrees at any accredited university. AUPHA is a global organization that welcomes all academic programs and people from the healthcare management and leadership and health policy academies worldwide. To check to see if your Doctoral program is a member, click here.
- The Competition is open to students in both traditional, in-residence doctoral programs and those in executive doctoral programs designed for working professionals.
- Essays must be the product of one individual (a single-authored work). Joint efforts will not be accepted. Essayists may recognize the contributions of faculty mentors and other research collaborators in the Acknowledgment section, along with disclosures of funding and other support, IRB approvals, etc. Additionally, essayists must disclose the use of any artificial intelligence tools.
- There is no limit to the number of students submitting essays from any academic program or university.

Instructions for Essayists

Essays may be up to 6,000 words, excluding the summary/abstract and reference list, and must be written following the most recent, 7th edition of American Psychological Association (APA) formatting. The summary/abstract should be approximately 150 words and follow the title page. Essays should be of publishable quality and should be the following type:

- Expository Essay
- Descriptive Essay
- Narrative Essay
- Argumentative/Persuasive Essay
- Original research
- Case Studies

The student's name and any acknowledgments of faculty mentors or other collaborators should appear only on the title page. There should be no identifying information within the manuscript. The essay's title should also appear on the summary page and the first page of the text.

All essays must be word-processed, double-spaced (including references), and have margins of 1 ¼ inches all around.

Upon submission, applicants will be required to acknowledge and specify the extent to which AI tools were used in the preparation and submission of their essay.

Evaluation

Essays submitted to AUPHA will be thoroughly reviewed by a committee composed of academic faculty and practitioner-scholars, co-chaired by Drs. Tory Hogan of The Ohio State University and Michele McGowan of King's College. The committee will employ five equally weighted criteria:

- Clearly articulated statement of purpose with necessary supporting evidence and integration of relevant evidence or arguments throughout the essay
- Essay clearly articulates the significance of the subject/topic to the field of Health Services, Healthcare Management, Leadership, and Policy
- There must be a section of the paper devoted to coverage of healthcare management or health policy practice implications
- There must be a section of the paper devoted to coverage implications and usefulness for guiding teaching of the subject matter (what to teach and how to teach it), generally or at the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral level(s)
- All clarity, conciseness, and elegance of the written word, including correct grammar, punctuation, and overall writing quality

Entries and Awards

Cash prizes will be awarded to the first-place, second-place, and third-place essayists. All three will receive a plaque from AUPHA commemorating the recognition of their essays.

The three finalists will have the opportunity to present their winning essays in one Doctoral Track session at the 2027 AUPHA Annual Meeting, June 22 - June 24, at the Hyatt Regency Savannah Hotel in Savannah, Georgia. AUPHA will provide complimentary Doctoral Student Registration to the Annual Meeting (all AUPHA Annual Meeting sessions are open to Doctoral Student Members); two hotel nights at the Hyatt Regency Savannah Hotel (single occupancy); $500.00 to cover airfare; and $300 for incidental costs, such as ground transportation and meals.

Publication

There is an opportunity for the first-place entry to be published in the *Journal of Health Administration Education*, the official journal of AUPHA. In this case, the winning essay will become the permanent property of AUPHA. The winning student essayist will be required to complete a copyright transfer form before publication in JHAE.

When and Where to Send Entries/Inquiries

Essays must be received at AUPHA by 11:59PM Pacific Time, Friday, January 8, 2027. Entries will only be accepted electronically. Submit your essay through the link below.

2027 AUPHA Doctoral Student Essay Submission Form

The three finalists will be notified in late February. We recommend all applicants hold the dates of Tuesday, June 22, 2026, through Thursday, June 24, 2027, in case they are selected as a finalist. For more information, contact Kelsey Kvandal, Graduate Programs and Social Media Manager at kkvandal@aupha.org.