

UCHICAGO GRADUATE/POSTDOC CAREER GUIDES

Higher Education Administration

OVERVIEW:

Academic administration is a terrific career path for advanced degree holders who enjoy academic institutions and yet may not be as consistently enthusiastic about classroom teaching or the “publish or perish” mandate that accompanies a faculty position. For those who especially enjoy the culture of the R1 – the top-tier research institutions like UChicago – an admin career can be particularly promising, as large institutions have complex and interesting administrative infrastructures with many and various administrative options and possibilities.

Student Services Administration, or **Student Affairs (SA)**, continues to enjoy its decade-long growth spurt, as does **Higher Ed Development** (fundraising, alumni relations, and donor relations). Both are good areas to explore, initially, as entry level positions open up with relative frequency. Particular areas of institutional growth in student affairs include, for example, international student support (including advanced language support and ESL services), diversity enhancement initiatives, writing programs, advising (including developmental academic advising, which can involve college preparation or transition programming), psychological counseling or crisis management, the list goes on.... Student Affairs gives you the opportunity to get involved in aspects of students life such as housing, sports, clubs, “Greek life,” student volunteerism, and community and public engagement initiatives.

Career Categories	Sample Roles and Activities
Admissions	Recruitment, Orientation, Registration,
Advising	May be organized by college or department; may be categorically specific to, for example, the Honors College, or to international students. Some advising positions require a counseling degree; those that are more strictly academic generally do not.
Career Counseling	At the undergraduate or graduate level
Development	Fundraising, Donor Relations
Developmental Education	Academic Bridge Services (for 1st-year students), Remediation programs
Disability Services	Advising, Technological support,
Diversity and Inclusion	Recruitment, along with a range of support services, for students, graduate students, postdocs, staff and faculty
Graduate Administration and/or Advising	Administration of graduate student success and support services includes, for example, financial packages, fellowships, teaching support, writing support, research and fieldwork administration, professional development, etc.



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Higher education is in an era of transition and transformation. If you're interested in administration, watch consistently for developments that signal opportunities. You'll want to build a broad sense of the range of academic landscapes, including liberal arts colleges, specialized schools (such as art schools and vocational niches), community colleges, and for-profit institutions, as well as the top-tier research institutions with which you are familiar. Once you are well informed about the structures governing various institutional and educational contexts, it will be important to start following your individual interests and strengths. Don't get distracted by one specific growth trend, as these are not always sustainable or predictable. Develop your own knowledge and skill set based on your passion for education and educational services. Talk to the staff in your departments and in various units at UChicago. Ask them about their jobs. Some of these conversations might happen casually, but don't be shy about approaching UChicago staff for informational interviews. And then make sure you explore other Chicago schools for networking purposes.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS:

General Administration:

- [American Association of University Administrators](#)

Student Affairs:

- [The Student Affairs Collective](#)
- [College Student Educators International](#)
- [NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education](#), which includes a careers site and a job list.
- [National Association for Campus Activities \(NACA\)](#)

Advising:

- [NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising](#)

Disability:

- [Association of Higher Education and Disability](#)

International Student Services:

- [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#)

Diversity and Inclusion

- [National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education](#)

Offices of Registration and Admissions:

- [American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers](#)

Development:

- [The Professional and Organizational Development \(POD\) Network in Higher Education](#)

There's a terrific site for links to various specific [academic administration professional organizations](#), which offers a picture of the wide range of administrative roles. We have listed some of the highlights:

- National Association for College Admission Counseling ([NACAC](#))
- National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions, Inc. ([NAAHP](#))
- National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics ([N4A](#))
- National Association for Developmental Education ([NADE](#))
- National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals ([NAGAP](#))
- National Association of Student Employment Administrators ([NSEA](#))



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JOB POSTINGS:

- [Academic 360](#)
- [HigherEdJobs](#)
- [Chronicle of Higher Ed](#)
- [HERC \(Higher Education Recruitment Consortium\)](#)
- [The NAPSA Placement Exchange](#)

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW:

- Seek out opportunities to collaborate and engage with stakeholders in a variety of academic positions and perspectives.
- In your informational interviews, find out what the issues and debates are currently of interest to staff in administrative contexts.
- Consider taking part in undergraduate or graduate orientation sessions and campus tours.
- If you are interested in **advising**, seek out opportunities in your department to work directly with undergraduates. Be sure to document that work with evidence of success. Advising experience will position you well for other student affairs jobs.
 - Quantify your advising history to show your full range of student advising experience
 - Can you set up a system of evaluations that document your outcomes and level of student satisfaction
- Look for opportunities to mentor undergraduate in the contexts of clubs or other extra-curricular contexts that interest you.

