

2026-2027 ADEA Council of Deans Fellowship Candidate Application Guide

The ADEA Council of Deans Fellowship (ADEA CDF) is a year-long, part-time fellowship aimed at creating a diverse pipeline of future leaders who will assume roles as dental school deans and other senior university leadership positions. What sets this program apart from other leadership programs is the intense mentoring that Fellows engage in; components of this are a faculty to Fellow ratio of 1:1 or 1:2, a two-week site visit to external institutions with mentoring from the dean, and a commitment to mentoring from the dean of the Fellow's home institution. The ADEA CDF will increase the number of qualified candidates for deanships and equip them with skills and experience to help them succeed. Fellows' career goals should include leadership at the dean or higher administrative level in the near future.

ADEA CDF Fellows will engage in formal leadership development programming (both on site and online), engage with a mentor and peer group, visit two dental schools for up to one week each, and complete a career development plan (CDP) along with an ADEA CDF capstone project that are individually designed to enhance their potential for senior leadership. During the program, Fellows will receive extensive mentoring, peer coaching and in-person learning. This program requires a significant time allocation of approximately a half day per week.

The ADEA CDF application process simulates the application process for the position of dean at a dental institution. Applicants are self-nominated, and a committee comprised of senior leaders from dental and higher education will review and rank each applicant. To incorporate as many aspects of a dean's search as reasonable, a dental dean's position description has been prepared for each of three types of academic institutions common in U.S. dental education:

1. Research intensive (top 20 [NIH-NIDCR-funded dental schools](#)),
2. Multi-focused mission with an emphasis on both research and clinical programs (NIH-NIDCR funded rank of 21-42) and
3. Clinical intensive reflecting schools with limited extramural research funding.

See pdf: [The University of Tomorrow School of Dental Medicine](#) containing descriptions of each of these three variations.

Applicants should select only one of the three position descriptions above (research intensive, multi-focused mission or clinical intensive) from which to base the approach to the application.

ADEA will select up to six individuals in the 2026-2027 cohort to participate in this fellowship. ADEA strongly encourages applications from individuals of diverse backgrounds (e.g., individual demographics, public and private institutions, different academic positions and disciplines) and graduates of ADEA leadership programs or other formal or informal programs and activities in areas related to administrative leadership and management, such as the Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine or American Council on Education Fellows Program. The ADEA CDF is not

intended for new deans. Individuals who have served as an interim or acting dean for less than one year may apply.

Program

Important Dates for Applicants

July 15 – Sept. 15, 2025	Applications can be submitted.
Sept. 15 – Oct. 15, 2025	Selection of candidates for interview and interviews are conducted.
Nov. 3 – Dec. 1, 2025	Final Selection: The committee will confer and select the cohort of Fellows and notify the Fellows. Written feedback will be provided to candidates who were interviewed.

Program Dates In Brief

<i>Date(s)</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Activity</i>
March 19 - 21, 2026	In person	2026 ADEA Annual Session & Exhibition: Attend Module III, graduation ceremony, Alumni Association Meeting and Orientation. (Fellows must arrive the day prior; session starts at 7:30am; fellows will attend the deans' business meetings on March 21 and 24).
April 6, 2026	Submit to LMS	Career development plan and draft Project Plan submission
April 19–22, 2026	In person	Module I: Fundamentals of Administrative Leadership (location TBD)
May 4, 2025 – Feb. 15, 2027	Online	Individual (x3) and group (x3) meetings with coach
May 1, 2026 – March 5, 2027	Online	Council of Deans, one-hour program each month
May 3– Aug. 30, 2026	In person	Site Visit 1
Sept. 1 – Dec. 17, 2026	In person	Site Visit 2
November 2026	In person	Module II: Practicing the Fundamentals of Administrative Leadership. ADEA Deans' Conference (TBA)
Feb. 15, 2027	Submit to LMS	Capstone project completion submission

March 12, 2027	In person	Module III, Graduation Luncheon and Alumni Association Meeting: 2026 ADEA Annual Session & Exhibition
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Criteria for Fellow Selection

There are two sets of criteria: General criteria and institution-specific criteria determined by the type of institution to which the candidate applies (research intensive, multi-focused mission or clinical intensive).

General Criteria

To be uploaded as attachments:

- Curriculum vitae
- Letter of interest (LOI)
- Bio sketch (two paragraphs describing your training and interests)
- Two to three letters of support, one of which must be from the applicant's dean
- Video (**five minutes**)

(See "Applicant Submission Instructions" on Page 4 for more details).

Notes: Candidates are responsible for inviting their sponsoring dean and recommender(s) to submit their letters as part of the online application. The system will generate an email invitation with a unique link for each recommender to access the system. ADEA encourages candidates to start the process early and invite recommenders as soon as possible. Candidates can work on their application, save it and return later to complete it.

The ideal candidate:

- Has been employed in dental education for at least seven years and is currently in a leadership role at the Associate/Assistant Dean, Chair or equivalent position.
- Has documented progressive leadership roles and growth across time within and external to dental education.
- Demonstrates interest in their professional development by past participation in ADEA leadership programming, such as the ADEA Leadership Institute and/or engagement in other formal or informal programs and activities in areas related to administrative leadership and management (e.g., the Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine or American Council on Education Fellows Program).
- Has contributed to their current institution's mission, knowledge and understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.
- Has served on a university-level committee.
- Has chaired a committee outside of a dental school (university, state or national organization).
- Has varied experience in leadership across organizations, such as ADEA Councils/committees, American Dental Association (ADA) committees or dental specialty organizations.
- Has state and national committee experience in organizations such as ADEA, ADA or dental specialty organizations.
- Has managed/supervised direct reports, which are defined as someone(s) whose tasks you direct and for whom you are responsible for evaluations. (In your LOI, describe who the direct reports are [faculty, students, staff, residents, etc.], how many of each, and over what period of

time.)

- Has managed a budget for an organization, department or other academic or administrative unit. (In your LOI, describe the purpose of the budget, your role in the oversight as well as the total dollar amount of the budget and over what period of time.)
- Has breadth of knowledge/experiences with stakeholders across multiple areas impacting dental education, such as curriculum, assessment, accreditation, alumni relations, dental societies, public health and policy.
- Has led change projects in dental education or dental related organizations.
- Has excellent listening, communication, and interpersonal skills.
- Demonstrates the highest level of integrity and professionalism and has a sense of humility and humor.

Please describe these activities in your LOI, including pertinent details that allow reviewers to assess your level of leadership.

Institution-specific Criteria

This application mimics the application process to become a dean. As a part of this simulation, candidates must choose and apply to one institution described in three fictitious job announcements. In addition to the qualifications above, candidates must demonstrate through their application materials (letter of intent, curriculum vitae and video) that they meet the qualifications required by that institution.

See pdf: [The University of Tomorrow School of Dental Medicine](#) for more details.

Fees and Additional Costs

The ADEA CDF program fee for 2026-2027 is \$15,000, which covers distance and in-person learning and use of an ADEA learning portal. The program fee also includes registration fees for the 2026 Deans' Conference and registration for the 2026 ADEA Annual Session & Exhibition. (The tuition does NOT cover the cost of travel, lodging and meals).

Information for Sponsoring Deans

- During the program, Fellows will receive extensive mentoring, peer coaching and in-person learning. This program requires a significant time allocation or approximately half a day per week.
- A letter of support from the candidate's sponsoring dean should outline the candidate's attributes and propensity for effective leadership at the dean's level. This letter will provide reviewers with an independent evaluation of the candidate to highlight experience, interest, and qualifications to serve as dean of a dental school. The letter also should address the candidate's strengths and areas for development to make the individual a strong dean candidate in the future.
- The dean is strongly encouraged to:
 - Provide the candidate with the necessary time to fully participate and complete assignments.
 - Provide specific mentoring throughout the year and participate in the Fellow's 360° assessment.
 - Review the **Guide for Sponsoring Deans**.

Information for Letters of Support

- Letters are required from one or two additional individuals who know the candidate well.
- Each letter should outline the candidate's attributes and propensity for effective leadership at the dean's level.
- These letters will provide the reviewers with an independent evaluation of the candidate to highlight experience, interest and qualifications to serve as dean of a dental school.

Applicant Submission Instructions

Select the type of institution (Research Intensive, Multi-focus Mission or Clinical Intensive).

See [The University of Tomorrow School of Dental Medicine](#) for more details.

1. Submit the following materials:

- *Curriculum Vitae (CV)*: A current CV in an easily readable format that reflects the candidate's educational background; past and current academic experience; and contributions to teaching, scholarship and service.
- *Biographical sketch*: A brief one-page summary of the candidate's background.
- *Candidate letter of interest (LOI)*: The LOI should outline the candidate's experience, interest and qualifications to serve as dean of a dental school of the selected institutional type; particular emphasis is placed on how the candidate responds to qualifications outlined in the respective position description. Please review the "Ideal Candidate" section above for more guidance.
- *Two to three letters of recommendation*: One from the candidate's dean and one or two additional letters from individuals who know the candidate well. Each letter should outline the candidate's attributes and propensity for effective leadership at the dean's level. These letters will provide the committee with an independent evaluation of the candidate to highlight experience, interest and qualifications to serve as dean of a dental school at the type of institution the candidate has selected (*See pdf: The University of Tomorrow School of Dental Medicine*). The application process directs candidates to include the email address of the recommenders who will be contacted to upload their letters to the packet. Candidates can work on their application, save it and return later to complete it.
- *Five-minute self-produced video*: You may upload a video or create one within the application site during the online application process; please keep to the five-minute timeline. The video provides initial information on the candidate's interview and speaking skills. It will also help reviewers initially assess how well the candidate can relate their strengths to the institution's needs. No special equipment is needed; candidates can use a mobile phone or tablet to record the video and audio. Once complete, the video should be uploaded to the application site. Specific areas of interest to be addressed in the video include:
 - a. Why are you interested in pursuing the dean's position at the institution type you have chosen?
 - b. How has your background, education and experience prepared you for this executive-level leadership position?
 - c. What is an example of a challenging situation in your previous position and how did you handle this?
 - d. What do you see as your limitations in leadership and how would you improve those limitations?

- e. What strengths would you bring to the position of dean?
- f. Any unique things you think would be of interest to the selection committee?

ADEA recommends that candidates start their application early as there will not be extensions for applications to this program.

Fellow Selection Process

The ADEA CDF application process simulates applying for the position of dean at a dental school. A committee comprised of senior leaders from dental and higher education will review and rank each candidate.

Note: Candidate application information, including the application packet and video conference as well as committee feedback, may be used for future reference by candidates, Fellows, mentors and/or coaches.

Your application to this program will use your existing information in your ADEA profile. Please ensure your profile is updated.

De-identified applicant information will be used to improve programs at ADEA and may be published. Identified information (e.g. biographies) of successful candidates will be published on ADEA websites, shared with your home institution, and may be used in ADEA promotional material. **By applying to this program, I agree that I have read and understand how my information could be used.**

This program provides complimentary registration to the ADEA Annual Session and Exhibition for your orientation and attendance at the Deans Conference. Please wait until you hear confirmation of your acceptance into this program before registering for the ADEA Annual Session and Exhibition.