



National Resource Center
for Academic Detailing

RECRUITING DETAILERS

*A reference guide for finding the
right detailers for your team.*



Recruiting & Retaining the Best Detailers

NaRCAD's Quick-Reference Guide

I. Identify Necessary Skills for the Position

The Ideal Detailer: Bridging Communication and Evidence for Impactful Conversations

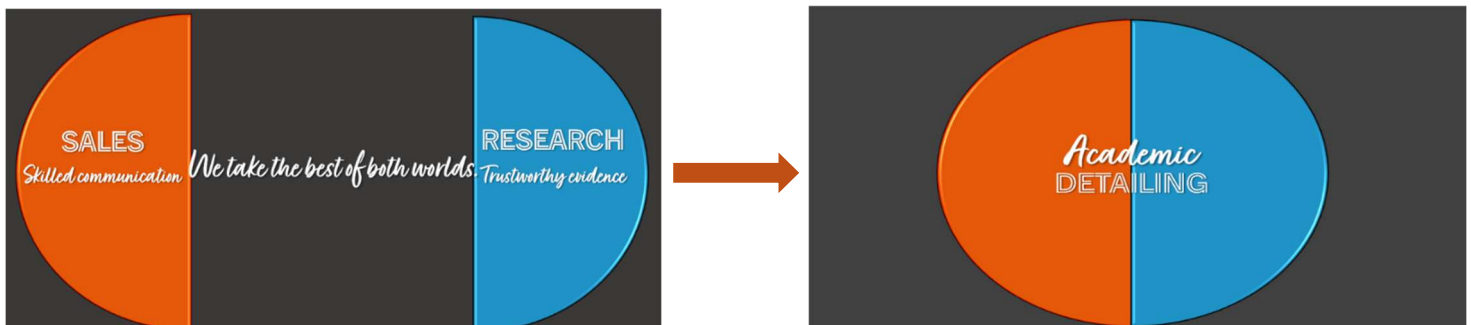
The Origins of AD: The early studies of academic detailing (AD) were motivated by the recognition that traditional continuing medical education (CME) relied on a didactic, passive model that did not result in widespread adoption of evidence-based practices.

By contrast, sales representatives, largely in pharmaceutical sales, deliver messages through direct 1:1 meetings with frontline clinicians, and have been successful at influencing behavior, resulting in increased sales of promoted medications. AD attempts to preserve the high-quality research and content from traditional CME, while delivering it in an engaging manner that encourages 1:1 interactivity, and without any focus on selling a product or receiving any compensation from a drug company

Balancing Sales with Research: Consequently, the ideal academic detailer possesses a unique blend of qualities drawn from both sales representatives and researchers. From the world of sales, detailers should embody strong communication skills and be personable, engaging, assertive, persuasive, and confident. These traits help build trusting relationships with clinicians, making conversations dynamic and impactful. While persistence is valuable, it's important to remember that AD is not about being "pushy".

Researchers and academics, on the other hand, possess qualities that illustrate the credibility and accuracy of the information being shared. Like researchers, detailers should be focused, trustworthy, analytical, pragmatic, and knowledgeable. They must rely on evidence-based medicine to inform their discussions with clinicians and their recommendations which support clinical decision-making, while avoiding being overly rigid or out of touch with what is happening on the frontlines.

AD seamlessly combines the best of both of these professions, effective communication and credible evidence. The ideal detailer is not just a skilled communicator but also an ambassador of high-quality, trustworthy information.



The Ideal Detailer: Three Key Categories

Successful detailers bring together a mix of communication skills, professional expertise, and dedicated resources to support clinical care. When identifying the right individuals for this role, three key categories should be considered:

1. Communication Skills

Interpersonal Skills & Relationship Building: At the heart of AD is effective, persuasive communication. Detailers must have strong interpersonal skills and social intuition, allowing them to interpret verbal and nonverbal cues and attune their approach to each clinician's unique needs. Building a trusting relationship is essential, requiring clear, concise messaging, as well as the ability to persuade clinicians to adopt new practices that will be of benefit to them and the patients they serve.



Communication, Time Management, & Adaptability: Beyond 1:1 interactions, detailers need to excel in written and technical communication to accurately document and track data that they collect from their detailing visits. They must also manage their time effectively, ensuring they prioritize liaising with clinic staff as much as communicating effectively with their team members. Additionally, facilitating adult learning is a key part of the role, requiring excellent public speaking skills and the ability to keep clinicians actively engaged in discussions. Finally, adaptability in communication style is crucial, as messages must be tailored to a variety of audiences and learning styles, often times at a moment's notice.

2. Professional Background

Clinical or Health Background: AD is built on a foundation of delivering the best available clinical information and evidence-based practices in an easy-to-adopt format. As such, ideal detailing candidates often come from backgrounds in public health, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, or related fields. While fluency in clinical content is highly valuable, much of the necessary knowledge for each intervention can be taught to the right candidate.

Motivational Interviewing: Experience or training in motivational interviewing is a strong asset. Some core AD principles such as reflective listening, needs assessment, and message customization, align closely with this approach.

3. Resources to Devote to the Project

Commitment to Program: Beyond skills and background, the best detailers will need to have the time and commitment to engage with the AD project. We highly recommend dedicating 12-16 hours to an intensive AD training with NaRCAD to become fully prepared for the field, as well as training within the specific AD programs or with other subject matter experts to prepare to deliver campaign clinical content. A strong passion for the intervention and its goals is essential, demonstrating the individual's dedication to the project.

Detailing Field Schedule: Once in the field, detailers must participate in regular check-ins, prepare for visits, track data, and commit to at least one visit per week (or another agreed-upon frequency set by the program). Flexibility is key, as scheduling visits outside of traditional working hours may be necessary. Additionally, some detailers may need to travel if they are detailing in person and covering rural or multiple jurisdictions.

Key detailer characteristics my AD program prioritizes or requires:

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Key detailer characteristics my AD program prefers:

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II. Create a Job Description

When creating a [job description](#) for an academic detailer, the hiring manager will want to clearly outline the role, expectations, and qualifications required for success. By creating a detailed job description, detailing programs can attract qualified candidates who are best suited for the role. Clearly outlining the responsibilities and expectations shows potential detailers the impact of their work and the skills they need to succeed. A well-structured job description should include the following key components, which NaRCAD has curated based on providing field technical assistance to programs for over 15 years.

1. Position Description

Provide a brief overview of the role, highlighting its purpose and importance. This section should explain how the detailer will engage with healthcare professionals, facilitate evidence-based discussions, and support clinical decision-making.

Position Description:

Clinical Educators make one-on-one educational visits to healthcare professionals, providing evidence-based, interactive sessions with front line clinicians about the efficacy, safety, and effectiveness of medications, guidelines, and prevention tools.

We are seeking independent contractors who can work flexible hours to meet with providers in [city/ state/ region] for a 3-month period to disseminate evidence-based information on [clinical topic]

2. Key Responsibilities

Clearly define the specific duties the detailer will perform.

Responsibilities:

- Participate in a 12-16 hour intensive 2-3 day communication techniques training.
- Deliver the service of one-on-one educational visits to physicians and health professionals on a designated clinical topic, using evidence-based materials to complement the presentation
- Establish and maintain positive, service-oriented relationships with prescribers and office staff through repeated office visits and contacts
- Develop creative outreach strategies to gain access to healthcare offices, schedule appointments, meet with clinicians, and follow up on requests for additional information and support
- Act as a liaison between the physician community and program staff
- Capture visit data and provide regular reports to program staff

3. Required and Preferred Qualifications

List the necessary skills, experience, and educational background candidates should possess. Consider distinguishing between "required" and "preferred" qualifications.

Qualifications:

- Degree: RN, RNP, PA, MD, PharmD, or RPh, MPH, or closely related field, with at least 3-5 years of professional experience.
- Thorough knowledge of clinical and pharmacological information relevant to primary care practice and topic
- Excellent communications skills and interpersonal skills; ability to assess clinicians' needs, communicate medical information, and deliver engaging presentations
- Strong written and organizational skills
- Self-motivated and able to work well both independently and as part of a team
- Must be proficient in basic computer skills and comfortable with learning new applications.
- Must possess a valid driver's license and a flexible schedule, with the ability to visit physicians during various times throughout the day.
- Preferred: Previous experience in medications management and therapeutic decision-making, research, epidemiology, public health, health education, communications/marketing, and/or pharmaceutical or medical sales experience.

Important skills to highlight in my academic detailer job description:

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Important information about my specific program and intervention to feature:

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III. Promote the Position



Internal Considerations for Recruiting Academic Detailers

Location of AD Program: Many AD programs are based within universities, public health departments, or governmental agencies. Securing leadership support within these institutions is necessary for maintaining program success and ensuring adequate resources for growth.

Public Health Departments & Burnout Risks: For recruitment amongst pre-established programs housed within public health departments, hiring managers must be mindful of potential burnout risks among current staff. Many public health professionals already manage heavy workloads, so recruiting within these departments should be approached with an awareness of existing responsibilities. Providing adequate support and flexibility can help prevent overburdening staff while still engaging them in detailing efforts.

Long-term vs. Short-term Positions: When staffing the program, hiring managers should consider both long-term and short-term positions. If possible, promoting full-time employees into detailing roles or increasing hours for part-time staff can provide stability and continuity. However, for programs that require more flexibility, recruiting part-time employees or professionals with adaptable schedules can be an effective strategy. Considering the length and needs of the AD project, while carefully identifying individuals who can take on additional responsibilities amidst balancing other projects, can help build a strong team of detailers.

External Considerations for Recruiting Academic Detailers

Building a strong AD team also requires strategic external partnerships and recruitment efforts. Leveraging professional networks and collaborating with key institutions can help identify skilled candidates and increase program visibility within the larger community.

Professional Societies & Academic Institutions: Additionally, professional societies and associations offer valuable recruitment opportunities by connecting detailing programs with experienced healthcare professionals. Tapping into these networks can streamline the search for candidates with relevant expertise. Similarly, academic institutions, such as medical schools, pharmacy schools, nursing programs, and public health programs, serve as excellent sources for potential detailers. Engaging with faculty and students can help attract individuals who are passionate about evidence-based medicine and clinician education.

Hospitals, Health Systems, Coalitions, & Boards of Health: Hospitals and health systems have many recruitment avenues. Partnering with healthcare organizations allows for collaboration on detailing initiatives while providing a direct link to professionals who understand the complexities

of clinical environments. Coalitions and working groups can also serve as platforms for spreading awareness about AD programs, engaging the community, and promoting available positions. Lastly, boards of health at local and state levels can further support recruitment efforts by aligning detailing initiatives with existing public health interventions.

Effective Strategies for Recruiting Academic Detailers

Job Postings & Contract Recruitment: Recruitment efforts should include a variety of strategies to attract a diverse group of candidates. Job postings on professional job boards, listservs, and networking platforms can help reach individuals actively seeking new opportunities. Detailing programs may also consider contract recruitment by outsourcing hiring efforts to specialized agencies with experience in healthcare staffing.

Leveraging Existing Relationships: In addition to formal job postings, leveraging existing relationships with external partners, community organizations, and professional groups already involved in public health can generate interest in detailing positions. Word-of-mouth referrals from trusted sources can also be particularly effective in identifying candidates who are well-suited for the role.

Events & Conferences: Finally, events and conferences provide valuable opportunities to promote detailing positions. Presenting about AD interventions, networking with attendees, and showcasing your program at exhibit tables can help generate interest and attract professionals eager to engage in clinician education and evidence-based outreach.

Recruitment strategies my program will use:

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IV. Review & Interview Applicants

Assessing the Cultural Fit

When recruiting detailers, it's imperative to assess whether candidates will align with the culture and values of the AD program and larger organization. Cultural fit ensures that the detailer will work well within the team, adapt to the team's dynamics, and contribute to the program's mission. There are several key factors to evaluate when assessing cultural fit:

1. Shared Values

First and foremost, it is essential to determine whether a candidate's core values align (e.g., honesty, integrity, respect, and compassion) with the AD program's mission and vision. This alignment is fundamental for ensuring long-term commitment and passion for the work. When candidates share the same values, they are more likely to thrive in the role and contribute meaningfully to the program's objectives.



2. Communication Style

Effective communication is central to the success of AD. During the interview process, it will be important to assess the candidate's ability to engage in constructive feedback and collaborate in team discussions through asking open-ended questions. A candidate who is open to feedback, willing to engage in dialogue, and able to communicate effectively with colleagues will contribute positively to the work environment.

3. Adaptability

Given the evolving nature of public health initiatives, it's important to gauge a candidate's adaptability. Evaluate how well they adjust to change, learn new skills, and handle challenges. A flexible candidate who thrives in changing environments is better suited to the role of a detailer, where they will frequently need to adjust strategies based on clinician needs and feedback.

4. Attitude

Look for candidates who exhibit signs of collaboration, team spirit, and a growth-oriented perspective. A positive attitude toward team dynamics and a willingness to grow professionally and personally can help foster a more cohesive and motivated team.

Cultural Fit Considerations: Avoiding Bias and Promoting Diversity

Preparing Interview Questions: While assessing cultural fit is important, it's essential to avoid bias and promote a diverse workforce. To achieve this, hiring managers must prepare interview questions that are legal and non-discriminatory.

Understanding Program Values: They also need to be aware of their own values and ensure they are evaluating candidates against a well-defined standard rather than personal preferences.

Understanding the program's core values can help guide this process, making sure there is fairness and consistency in the evaluation of candidates.

Avoiding Assumptions: Additionally, hiring managers must avoid making assumptions about individuals based on their demographics or background. Similarly, they need to be mindful of not favoring candidates who appear similar to themselves or existing team members. Diversity in perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds can lead to stronger and more innovative teams.

Diversifying the Interview Panel: To further mitigate bias, the interview panel should be diverse and representative of different levels within the program or organization. A balanced panel will bring varied perspectives to the evaluation process, reducing the potential for unconscious bias and promoting a more inclusive selection process.



Case Study #1: Evaluating a Potential Detailer Candidate

Alex is a highly knowledgeable clinical pharmacist with a strong background in evidence-based medicine and public health. They are passionate about improving patient care and have a deep understanding of clinical content and guidelines.

However, Alex faces challenges with verbal communication. They often struggle to articulate complex information in an engaging and clear manner. Additionally, they lack confidence when interacting with colleagues outside of the pharmacy and find it difficult to build relationships with others in a professional setting.

Given these factors, is Alex a strong candidate for an academic detailing position?

Probably not.

Effective communication and confidence are essential for detailing. Since the role requires building trusting relationships with clinicians and facilitating evidence-based behavior change, Alex's difficulties with communication and public speaking may hinder their ability to succeed in this position.



Case Study #2: Evaluating a Potential Detailer Candidate

Jamie has a solid background in public health and community outreach, with extensive experience working with diverse populations. She is passionate about advocating for health equity and has led numerous discussions on public health topics. Jamie is also a strong communicator, skilled at building strong relationships and engaging with healthcare professionals in a collaborative manner.

However, Jamie lacks formal clinical training and does not have experience with clinical guidelines or medical terminology, which are key components of academic detailing.

Is Jamie a strong candidate for an academic detailing position?

Yes, with support!

While Jamie may need additional clinical training, Jamie's ability to engage, listen, and support clinicians in behavior change makes her a promising candidate. Her strengths in communication, relationship building, and public health can be leveraged in this role.

Core values our project embodies that we want to see reflected in a hire:

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Considerations and specific ways we will diversify our interview panel:

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Other cultural fit considerations when hiring detailers:

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V. Check References

When conducting reference checks for potential candidates, it is important to approach the process thoughtfully and with respect for both the candidate and their references.



Obtaining Consent: First, obtain consent from candidates before reaching out to their references. This not only demonstrates professionalism but also ensures that candidates are aware of and comfortable with the individuals being contacted.

Checking Credibility of References: Next, it's important to ensure the references are credible and relevant. Choose references who can provide meaningful, honest feedback about the candidate's skills, work ethic, and experience. Ideally, these references should have worked closely with the candidate in a professional capacity and be familiar with their strengths and

weaknesses in relevant areas.

Asking Open-ended Questions: When speaking with references, ask open-ended questions that allow for detailed responses. For example, ask about the candidate's communication style, ability to collaborate with others, ability to "think on their feet", and how they handle challenges. This helps to uncover valuable insights into whether the candidate's skills align with the specific needs of your program.

Reference check questions and considerations for detailer candidates:

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VI. Make an Offer

Compensation: Compensation should be competitive, considering both pharmaceutical detailing standards and the specialized skills required for academic detailing. Ensuring fair salary and benefits not only attracts strong candidates but also reinforces the value of the role.

Roles & Responsibilities: Clearly defining the role and responsibilities is essential for setting expectations. As discussed, a well-structured job description should outline the job, key duties, and required qualifications. NaRCAD's existing [job description](#) can serve as a useful reference.

Onboarding: A structured onboarding process is critical for setting new detailers up for success. This should include comprehensive training and ongoing support to build confidence and effectiveness in the role. Visiting NaRCAD.org can provide myriad tools that will serve as excellent onboarding resources. You can also consider having a new detailer shadow an established detailer. Connecting with NaRCAD can help establish a detailed training plan to ensure a smooth transition into the field.

Candidate Questions: Finally, encourage candidate engagement by inviting questions and addressing any concerns. Since AD is a new field for many, providing an open space for discussion helps candidates feel confident in their decision and fully understand the role's expectations and responsibilities.



Considerations for making an offer to a detailer candidate:

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VII. Retain Employees



Checking In & Celebrating Achievements: To foster a supportive and growth-oriented environment, regular check-ins are essential, whether they involve the entire team or more personal, 1:1 conversations with a supervisor. These interactions provide an opportunity for feedback, reflection, and alignment on goals. It's also important to recognize and reward the valuable contributions of each team member, celebrating their achievements and reinforcing their impact within the program.

Opportunities for Growth: Growth opportunities play a key role in empowering individuals to stay engaged in their work. Providing avenues for training, mentorship, and career development ensures that team members feel

supported in their professional journey and boosts team morale.

Connecting with NaRCAD's Community: Finally, fostering connections within the NaRCAD community is crucial for team members to stay engaged and inspired. By encouraging detailers to [join the NaRCAD Community](#), they remain informed about upcoming events and stay connected to peers. This sense of belonging can inspire collaboration, learning, and innovation among individual teams and the larger AD community.

Ideas for retaining detailers in my program:

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