DMS: 08 – ACADEMIC RECRUITMENT, ADMISSIONS, AND ENROLLMENT POLICY

I. PURPOSE

To define, publish, and ensure consistent application of the recruitment, admission, and enrollment practices for the Lincoln Memorial University-School of Medical Sciences (LMU-SMS) Doctor of Medical Science (DMS) program, ensuring they are readily available to the public and in alignment with program policies, institutional practices, and accreditation standards.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

The DMS program is committed to transparent and consistent recruitment, admissions, and enrollment practices.

Recruitment:

- The DMS program actively engages with prospective students and the public to promote awareness of the program and its goals.
- Faculty and staff regularly meet with professional organizations and academic institutions to share information about the program and encourage applications.
- Recruitment efforts also include targeted outreach to Lincoln Memorial University's PA programs, participation in local, regional, and national conferences, and ongoing digital marketing campaigns.
- The program also has a Guaranteed Professional Admission Pathway available to current LMU-SMS physician assistant students.

Admissions:

- The DMS Admissions Committee oversees the admissions process, ensuring that all applicants are evaluated fairly and consistently. The DMS program follows a rolling admissions cycle. As a result, applicants who submit their application materials earlier have a higher likelihood of securing admission.
- Transfer Policy: The DMS program will collect and evaluate all transcripts and apply course credit if deemed appropriate. A student can request a maximum of nine (9) transfer credits.

III.   DEFINITIONS

Rolling admissions cycle: A continuous application review process where candidates are evaluated as applications are received, rather than after a fixed deadline.

Application Materials: The set of required documents submitted by applicants to be considered for admission to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the applicant's academic, professional, and personal qualifications. Required materials include application submitted online via the official website, official transcripts from all previously attended institutions, two DMS Applicant Recommendation Forms (one from a doctoral-level medical practitioner, and one from a professional colleague), personal statement, Curriculum Vitae, and official copy of PA license verification (if applicable) or NCCPA certification (or equivalent) within 9 months of matriculation into the program. A combined Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Test of Spoken English (TSE) is required for international applicants whose native language is not English, to demonstrate proficiency.

Admission criteria: The established qualifications and standards that applicants must meet to be considered for acceptance into the program. These criteria ensure that candidates possess the necessary academic background, professional certification, and potential for success in a rigorous doctoral-level curriculum. Meeting these criteria does not guarantee admission but establishes the minimum eligibility requirements. The admissions criteria include:

1.   A graduate of an ARC-PA accredited program or international equivalent;
2.   Current physician assistant certification (NCCPA or other); or unencumbered licensure as a physician assistant in the U.S.A. or international jurisdiction within nine (9) months post matriculation;
3.   Demonstrated potential for success in an advanced rigorous doctoral-level program (e.g., GPA & extracurricular activities);
4.   No history of self-reported negative legal, administrative, or licensure action related to the practice of medicine or medical education;
5.   An applicant whose native language is not English needs to submit scores from the combined TOEFL and TSE examination unless the applicant is a graduate of a U.S. college or university. The minimum required score for the IBT (Internet Based Testing) is 79 and a minimum score of 26 is required for the speaking component.

Candidates are encouraged to continue practicing clinically as a PA or actively teaching in graduate medical education while enrolled in the program, though this is not required.

Medical Education Major applicants without 2 years of full-time academic experience are recommended to start the program in the Fall semester; however, it is not required.

Norm-referenced interview scoring system: Applicants are evaluated using standardized rubrics and ranked relative to other candidates.

Guaranteed admissions: Guaranteed admissions is available for students who enroll in the DMS Guaranteed Professional Admissions (GPA) pathway and who meet standards outlined in the DMS Guaranteed Professional Admissions Pathway Policy.

Waitlist: A list of qualified applicants who may be offered admission if a seat becomes available in the program.

Enrollment: The process by which an accepted student formally registers for the program, completes required documentation, and pays any applicable fees to secure their seat in the program.

Matriculation: The official start of the student's academic journey in the DMS program, marked by participation in coursework and fulfillment of all initial program requirements.

IV.   AUDIENCE

This policy applies to prospective students, current students, faculty, and administrative staff involved in the DMS program.

V.   COMPLIANCE

If students fail to complete the required onboarding documents prior to the assigned deadline, admission into the program may be revoked.

Compliance with this policy ensures adherence to accreditation standards and institutional guidelines, thereby promoting fairness and transparency in the admissions process. Compliance is reviewed annually by the DMS Admissions Committee.

VI.   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Program Director: The DMS Program Director is the Responsible University Officer for revising and updating this policy.

DMS Admissions Committee: A faculty-led committee responsible for overseeing the review of applications, conducting interviews, and making admission decisions based on the program's established criteria and program policies. The Admissions Committee makes judgment on any special admissions considerations.

DMS Admissions Coordinator: Responsible for screening and reviewing applications, coordinating interviews, managing applicant communications, and assisting with onboarding.

VII.   PROCEDURES

Application Submission: Prospective students submit applications through the DMS admissions website by the specified deadline. All application materials are submitted online via the official website.

Application Review: All applications are initially screened and scored by the DMS Admissions Coordinator using a standardized rubric to determine who is offered an interview. If the number of applicants exceeds the current enrollment capacity, applicants in the Guaranteed Professional Admissions Pathway, followed by applicants with the highest scores, will be interviewed first.

Any uncertainties regarding an applicant's eligibility will be referred to the DMS Admissions Committee for final determination.

Interview Process: Qualified applicants meet with at least two DMS faculty/staff members for a structured interview. Candidates are scored using standardized rubrics, and scores are averaged. Interviewers provide qualitative feedback, and norm-referenced scoring is used to rank applicants. Interviewers submit admission recommendations to the DMS Admissions Committee for review and decision. In the case of any disagreement or tie, the Admissions Committee Chair makes the final admissions decision. If the number of interviewees exceeds the current enrollment capacity, applicants in the Guaranteed Professional Admissions Pathway will be accepted first.

Admission Decision: Applicants are notified of admission decisions via the e-mail address provided on their application. The candidate will either be offered a seat, placed on a wait list, or declined a seat. Decisions are typically communicated within two (2) weeks following the completion of the interview process. Admissions ranking is not shared with the candidates. Applicants who are not admitted may be offered a place on a waitlist or encouraged to reapply in the following semester.

Enrollment: All accepted students must complete onboarding (seat fee and enrollment package provided by the Admissions Coordinator) within thirty (30) days of acceptance or by the first day of class, whichever comes first. If the onboarding and enrollment requirements are not completed by the deadline, then the candidate may be asked to reapply.

Non-U.S.A. citizens must furnish evidence demonstrating means of financial support while enrolled at the University. All above documentation must be received and admission granted before issuance of an I-20 form, necessary for obtaining a student visa. The international student granted admission to LMU-SMS will receive a letter of acceptance; the letter and the I-20 form furnished by the University must be presented to the Consular Officer of the United States to whom the student applies for a student visa. LMU-SMS will not enroll any student not approved by the Department of Homeland Security; LMU-SMS will not enroll students issued visas for enrollment at other colleges or universities.

Academic Planning: All enrolled students will meet with the Admissions Coordinator prior to matriculation to determine course schedule and to create a Student Advising Worksheet.

For all course(s) in which applicants request transfer credit, applicants must submit official transcripts and course syllabi from the institution where the original course(s) were taught. The DMS Program Director will evaluate these materials to determine if the course(s) have similar content and competencies in order to award transfer credit.

VIII. CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information regarding this policy, please contact the Doctor of Medical Science Program Director.

IX.   DOCUMENT HISTORY

Effective Date: April 17th, 2025

Revised: September 30th, 2025