

DMS: 12 – Learner Rights and Responsibilities Policy

I. PURPOSE

This policy outlines the principles of conduct for students in the Lincoln Memorial University-School of Medical Sciences (LMU-SMS) Doctor of Medical Science (DMS) program. It serves to establish the fundamental rights afforded to every learner and to define the corresponding standards of responsibility, professional conduct, and academic integrity expected of all students.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

The DMS program is committed to fostering a learning environment built on mutual respect, academic honesty, and the highest standards of professionalism. Every learner is guaranteed fundamental rights and is, in turn, expected to uphold their responsibilities to the university, the program, their colleagues, and the community. Adherence to these standards is a core requirement for academic progression and applies to all academic, clinical, and extracurricular activities, including all forms of electronic and social media communication, whether conducted on or off university property. Learners are responsible for understanding and adhering to these standards; lack of awareness does not exempt individuals from accountability.

III. DEFINITIONS

- **Academic Integrity:** A commitment to the fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, and responsibility in scholarship. It requires producing original work and giving proper credit to the ideas and words of others.
- **Academic Misconduct:** Any action that violates academic integrity, including but not limited to:
 - **Abetting:** Encouraging or assisting another student to do something wrong.
 - **Cheating:** Acting dishonestly to gain an advantage, such as using unauthorized study materials, obtaining information from another student to complete program assessments, or altering grade records.
 - **Plagiarism:** Offering the work of another as one's own without proper acknowledgement, including material from artificial intelligence, books, articles, or other students.
 - **Fabrication:** Presenting falsified work as genuine.
 - **Misrepresentation:** Any act or omission with the intent to deceive.
- **Professional Misconduct:** Behavior that violates the ethical and professional standards of the program, the [Railsplitter Community Standards Guide](#), or the healthcare profession.

IV. AUDIENCE

This policy applies to all LMU-SMS DMS students.

V. COMPLIANCE

Adherence to the standards outlined in this policy is a mandatory condition of maintaining good standing in the DMS program. Failure to meet these responsibilities constitutes professional misconduct and may result in disciplinary action. The program reserves the right to address conduct that occurs off-campus, including online, if it adversely affects the health, safety, or security of any member of the university community or violates professional standards.

VI. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Doctor of Medical Science Program Director is the Responsible University Officer for revising and updating this policy.

VII. Standards

Learner Rights

Every learner is entitled to a learning environment protected by the following fundamental rights:

- **A Fair and Respectful Environment:** To learn in an unprejudiced environment free from mistreatment, discrimination and harassment. Mistreatment is handled by the [SMS Policy: Student Grievance Policy: Mistreatment](#). All matters related to discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), and sexual misconduct are governed by the official LMU Policies managed by the Office of Institutional Compliance (including the [Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct \(Title IX\)](#), [Anti-Discrimination Policy](#), and the [Notice of Equal Opportunity](#) found in the [LMU Railsplitter Community Standards Guide](#)). Students must report such concerns directly to the Office of Institutional Compliance.
- **Due Process and Appeals:** To receive proper notice and a fair process for any academic or disciplinary issue.
- **A Safe Campus:** To expect the campus and its facilities to be maintained to promote cleanliness and safety.
- **Constructive Feedback and Advising:** To receive proper instruction in courses and timely feedback on performance and guidance from an academic advisor.
- **Academic Freedom:** To enjoy the same freedom of speech, peaceful assembly, and right of petition that other citizens within the university mission enjoy, and to be a member of an academic community where institutional powers are not employed to inhibit intellectual and personal development.

- **Confidentiality and Access to Records:** To have access to, and protection of financial, academic and/or disciplinary records, as guaranteed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- **Right to Report:** To report any form of harassment or hazing without fear of coercion, intimidation, or retaliation. Students may report a [Title IX incident](#) or a [Discrimination Complaint](#) using the process outlined on Lincoln Memorial University's website.
- **Intellectual Property:** To retain ownership of original intellectual property created during the course of study, subject to university policies on sponsored research or use of significant university resources. The university shall have a non-exclusive, royalty-free license to use student-created work for educational purposes.

Learner Responsibilities

Every learner is accountable for upholding the following standards at all times:

- **Uphold Professional Conduct and Characteristics:** To maintain high standards of conduct and demonstrate characteristics consistent with a healthcare professional, including:
 - **Altruism:** Prioritizing the needs of others before self.
 - **Caring and Compassion:** Treating others as individuals and showing compassion.
 - **Emotional Resiliency:** Adapting, being flexible, and tolerating ambiguity.
 - **Excellence:** A commitment to exceeding minimum expectations and carrying out professional responsibilities ethically.
 - **Integrity:** Being honest, accepting personal responsibility for actions, and recognizing the limits of one's training.
 - **Respect for Others:** Being reliable and punctual, maintaining confidentiality, and facilitating a collegial atmosphere.
 - **Service:** Sharing knowledge, talent, and resources.
- **Maintain Academic Integrity:** To foster complete honesty and refrain from cheating, plagiarizing, or submitting work they did not autonomously author, in accordance with the university honor code.
 - **Honor Code:** "I hereby attest that as a learner advancing my knowledge and skills for the purposes of patient care, I will perform all tasks, assignments, tests, and quizzes to the best of my ability. I will refrain from cheating, plagiarizing, borrowing, or stealing or otherwise submitting work that I did not autonomously author. I will uphold the highest standards of professionalism at all times."

- **Maintain Confidentiality:** To respect the privacy of all health information in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and program policy. Students may not discuss or post any protected information about classmates, patients, faculty, or staff on any platform.
- **Proper Identification:** Learners are accountable for accurately representing their current educational status and professional credentials in all academic, clinical, and professional settings. Individuals should identify themselves according to their present role and avoid any implication of holding a degree, certification, or credential that has not yet been awarded. The “Doctor of Medical Science” designation or similar titles may only be used after the degree has been officially conferred.
- **Management of Professional and Academic Commitments:** The DMS program is designed to accommodate practicing Physician Assistants (PAs). The application of doctoral concepts in a professional setting is encouraged. However, employment is not a requirement for admission or continuation in the program. All learners, regardless of employment status, are responsible for managing their time and professional commitments to meet all academic requirements. Professional work commitments do not excuse failure to meet academic deadlines or participate in required activities, though flexibility may be granted according to the DMS Late Assignment Policy when appropriate communication occurs.
- **Adhere to Digital and Online Etiquette:** To exhibit professional and ethical behaviors on all digital platforms, including social media. These include, but are not limited to:
 - Refraining from posting disparaging comments, patient, colleague, faculty, or staff information, or unprofessional content.
 - Maintaining professional boundaries by not engaging with faculty or staff on personal social media platforms during enrollment in the program.
 - Adhering to professionalism guidelines stated within the DMS handbook and course syllabi.
- **Respect for University Property and Program Materials:** To handle all university property with care. It is expressly prohibited to make audio or video recordings of any learning or assessment activities or to copy and distribute any program materials without prior written permission from the Program Director.
- **Maintain a Professional Learning Environment:** To adhere to the program’s dress code as defined in the [DMS Student Handbook](#) and avoid any activities that interfere with the learning opportunities of any student.
- **Avoid Conflicts of Interest:** Recognize and avoid situations that create a conflict of interest, such as acting as a healthcare provider for colleagues, faculty or staff.
- **Report Arrests or Formal Charges:** To report any arrest or formal charge for an infraction of the law (other than minor traffic violations) to the Program Director within two (2) business days.

- **Adhere to Policies and Prohibited Conduct:** To know and abide by all policies of the university and program. A comprehensive list of prohibited conduct is detailed in the official Railsplitter Community Standards Guide. Harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct are strictly prohibited. Allegations of such conduct are not handled through program grievance procedures or the SPC but must be reported directly to, and will be adjudicated exclusively by, the LMU Office of Institutional Compliance according to official university policies.

VIII. PROCEDURES

The DMS program has established clear and distinct processes for handling student concerns, upholding student rights, and addressing violations of responsibility. Students must follow the procedures outlined in the relevant policies:

Academic & Non-Academic Grievances

- All grievances, including grade reconsiderations and conflicts with students or faculty, are governed by the DMS Due Process, Grievance, and Appeals Policy.

Academic Progression & Remediation

- Processes for late assignments and academic remediation are governed by the DMS Late Assignment Policy and DMS Remediation Policy respectively.

Professional Misconduct

- The adjudication of alleged professional misconduct is governed by the DMS Student Evaluation, Feedback, Academic Advising, and Retention Policy.

Appeals of SPC Decisions

- Any appeal of a formal SPC decision is governed by the [SMS Policy - Student Appeals](#).

Grievances of Mistreatment or Discrimination

- These concerns must be reported as directed in the [SMS Policy: Student Grievance Policy: Mistreatment](#) or [LMU Office of Institutional Compliance](#).

IX. CONTACT INFORMATION

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

X. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Effective date: 2/17/2026