

DMS 6: Student Evaluation, Feedback, Academic Advising, and Retention Policy

I. PURPOSE

To outline how the program evaluates learner performance, provides feedback, conducts academic advising, and supports student retention. This policy also details the procedures of the Lincoln Memorial University-School of Medical Sciences (LMU-SMS) Doctor of Medical Science (DMS) program Student Progress Committee (SPC), including potential actions the committee may take.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

The DMS program is committed to fostering student success by providing a supportive academic environment that promotes retention and degree completion. This includes transparent evaluation processes, a commitment to timely and constructive feedback on submitted work, and formal academic advising.

The program monitors and evaluates students' academic and professional progress through several key functions: Course Directors monitor student performance within their courses, Academic Advisors track the overall progress of their advisees, and the Student Progress Committee (SPC) convenes for regularly scheduled meetings each semester. Additional SPC meetings may be convened as needed to address specific student concerns that arise. During these meetings, faculty discuss student progress to highlight any potential issues of concern. If any student meets criteria for individual referral to the SPC, a formal process will occur as outlined below.

III. DEFINITIONS

- **Academic advising:** Each student is assigned to a program faculty member or the Program Director as their academic advisor during the first semester of the program. Students typically remain with the same advisor throughout their enrollment; however, reassignments may occur due to unforeseen circumstances. Academic advisors provide guidance on scholarly projects, monitor academic and professional progress, and communicate any concerns to the SPC during regularly scheduled meetings. More frequent meetings may be required if academic or professionalism concerns arise.
- **Academic Probation:** A formal status indicating a student has significant academic or professionalism deficits that warrant frequent and formal monitoring by the SPC. While on probation, a student may be required to adhere to an individualized study plan or other specific requirements determined by the committee. Failure to meet the terms of probation may result in further SPC action, up to and including dismissal from the program.
- **Dismissal:** A permanent, SPC-initiated discontinuation of a student's enrollment in the program. Students dismissed for professionalism deficits are not eligible to reapply to the DMS program.
- **Egregious Violation:** A single act of professional misconduct that is sufficiently severe in nature to warrant immediate formal disciplinary review. Such violations may include, but are not limited to, actions that compromise the safety of others, harassment, or significant ethical breaches.
- **Evaluation of Academic Performance:** Academic performance is evaluated through course-specific assessments including but not limited to, written assignments, recorded

assignments, discussion boards, live discussions, quizzes, and both written and practical examinations, as detailed in each course syllabus. If an assignment has an associated rubric, it will be available in the Learning Management System to help students understand assignment expectations.

- **Evaluation of Professionalism:** Professionalism is evaluated throughout the DMS program in all settings, including coursework and both synchronous and asynchronous interactions with faculty, staff, and fellow students. In some cases, professionalism is explicitly assessed as a graded component within assignment rubrics. More broadly, professional behavior is expected at all times and is continuously monitored by program faculty and staff.
- **Event:** Arrest, formal criminal charge, or adverse action against their professional license.
- **Feedback:** Course-specific feedback may be provided by principal faculty, instructional faculty, or the Program Director and may be individualized, directed to small groups, or shared with the entire class. Feedback on scholarly work is given by each student's assigned advisor, offering tailored guidance throughout the project. In matters related to conduct or professionalism, any DMS faculty or staff member may provide feedback as appropriate.
- **Pattern of Behavior:** A series of separate acts of professional misconduct that when viewed collectively, indicate a significant concern regarding the student's overall professionalism. A pattern may be identified by incidents occurring across multiple courses, in different settings, or as reported by multiple individuals.
- **Recurrent Behavior:** The repetition of a specific unprofessional act for which a student has received prior informal notification and counseling. This demonstrates a failure to correct behavior after being given an opportunity to do so.
- **Self-Report:** A student's professional and mandatory obligation to proactively notify the Program Director, within the timeline specified in program policy, of arrest, formal criminal charge, or adverse action against their professional license.
- **Student Progress Committee (SPC):** A standing faculty committee that monitors student academic progress and professionalism across the program, reviews assessment and progression data, and makes determinations in matters that extend beyond the scope of an individual course. Course-level remediation is managed by the Course Director, though SPC may review cases referred for major or repeated concerns. The SPC Chair coordinates referrals and communicates decisions to students and Course Directors.

IV. AUDIENCE

This policy applies to all LMU-SMS DMS students.

V. COMPLIANCE

Students who fail to comply with the recommendations of the SPC will be subject to dismissal from the program.

VI. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

VII. PROCEDURES

Evaluation and feedback

Students will receive evaluation and feedback on all academic assessments as soon as possible, but no later than three (3) business days after the original assessment due date. For assessments submitted after the due date, feedback will be provided within seven (7) business days of the late submission. This policy does not imply acceptance of late submissions, which is subject to the DMS Late Assignment Policy.

Academic advising

Significant academic advising interactions related to academic or professional concerns, or as directed by the SPC, are documented by faculty using the program's official Event Form. This documentation is maintained in the student's file.

Pathways to the Student Progress Committee (SPC)

Matters are brought before the SPC through distinct pathways.

Academic and Professional Monitoring (At Risk)

Any DMS faculty or staff member may recommend a student for referral to the SPC. The SPC will make the final determination on whether to act upon such recommendations. Reasons for referral include:

- Being identified as "at risk" according to the DMS Student Progression and Deceleration Policy
- Failure to successfully complete a required remediation plan
- Experiencing non-academic hardships that may impact academic performance
- Faculty concerns regarding academic performance in any course
- Lack of improvement despite individualized feedback
- Other matters deemed necessary by the DMS Program Director

Professional Misconduct Reporting

Any member of the university community may report a potential breach of professional conduct.

- **Initial assessment:** A designated DMS program faculty member or the Program Director will conduct an initial assessment to determine the nature and severity of the alleged violation. This assessment determines the appropriate procedural path. All reports of unprofessional conduct are documented internally using the program's official Event Form.

Path 1: Informal Resolution

This path is for single, non-egregious professionalism concerns.

- **Action:** The student is notified through university email by a faculty member or the Program Director, describing the specific concern and referencing expected professional standards. In the case of a first offense of academic misconduct (e.g., cheating or plagiarism), the student will receive a formal warning and a grade of zero (0) for the assessment, in accordance with the DMS Remediation Policy.
- **Documentation:** The email communication and a summary of the concern will be documented on an Event Form that is placed in the student's file.

Path 2: Formal Resolution (SPC Referral)

This path is for serious violations or for patterns of behavior not resolved informally.

A formal referral to the SPC is mandatory for conduct meeting the definition of an Egregious Violation, Pattern of Behavior, or Recurrent Behavior. This includes failure to self-report within two (2) business days of an event.

- **Action:** The matter is formally referred to the SPC for review and adjudication.
- **Documentation:** All relevant Event Forms and prior communications are provided to the SPC for review and are linked to the official meeting minutes.

Non-Academic Grievances and Mistreatment

Students should first seek to resolve grievances or concerns of mistreatment informally, as outlined in the DMS Due Process, Grievance, and Appeals Policy and the [SMS – Student Grievance Policy: Mistreatment](#).

If the matter remains unresolved, the student may file a formal complaint using the program’s official grievance form, which will be submitted to the SPC for review.

Any committee member directly involved in the grievance will be recused from the SPC review.

Student Progress Committee (SPC) Adjudication Procedures

Once a matter is formally referred, the SPC will follow these procedures:

- **Composition:** The SPC is composed of the SPC Chair and a minimum of three (3) other members of the SMS faculty and staff.
- **Notification:** Students will be notified of a referral to the SPC and the reason(s) for the referral via their university email at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. Notification will also be sent via certified mail. The notification will include the date, time, and location of the meeting. A read receipt will be requested for the email notification.
- **Meeting Attendance and Protocol:** Meetings are scheduled during regular university business hours. Student attendance is strongly encouraged when requested, though the program understands scheduling conflicts may arise.
- **Confidentiality:** All SPC proceedings are confidential. Only the student and University SPC committee members may attend SPC meetings. Audio/video recording is prohibited. Students attending virtually must verify no one else is present.
- **Meeting Proceedings:** The committee will review all aspects of a student’s performance, including any relevant Event Forms. The student will be given the opportunity to provide a statement and answer questions.
- **Standard of Proof:** The level of proof used for any decision shall be “more likely than not”.
- **Unwarranted Referrals:** If the SPC determines a referral is unwarranted, the matter will be documented, and no further action will be taken.
- **SPC Actions and Sanctions:** The SPC may recommend one or more of the following actions:
 - Professional or academic remediation
 - Professional or academic mentorship (e.g., required periodic advising meetings documented via Event Forms)
 - Development of individualized study plans (which may include mandated advising sessions)
 - Reflection on causes of academic or professionalism deficiencies

- Academic deceleration, which involves creation of a revised Student Advising Worksheet
- Placement on academic probation
- A formal written warning or reprimand placed in the student's file
- Assignment of a failing grade for a course or assessment
- Referral of the case to a higher institutional authority
- Temporary suspension from the program
- Dismissal from the program
- Other actions deemed appropriate by the DMS Program Director
- **Decision and Notification:** Decisions are made by a simple majority. The SPC Chair is a non-voting member, except in a tie. The recommendation is forwarded to the SMS Dean within 24 hours of the decision. Within 24 hours of the decision, the SPC Chair also emails the student the Committees' decision via their university email and sends an official notification via certified mail to their permanent address of record.. A read receipt will be requested for the email notification.
- **Process for Dismissal:** In the event of dismissal, the Program Director will follow the procedures outlined in the [SMS Leave of Absence, Withdrawal, and Dismissal Processes and Procedures Policy](#) to notify the relevant university offices.
- **Process for Appeals:** Any SMS student who has a summary action or judgement placed on them by the SPC has the right to appeal that decision. For more detailed information, please see the [SMS Policy: Student Appeals](#).

VIII. CONTACT INFORMATION

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

IX. DOCUMENT REVIEW

Effective Date: 2/18/2026