

DMS: 09 – STUDENT PROGRESSION AND DECELERATION POLICY

I. PURPOSE

To define the criteria for progression through the Lincoln Memorial University School of Medical Sciences (LMU-SMS) Doctor of Medical Science (DMS) program, including minimum course passing standards, degree completion requirements and timelines, and the factors used to identify students at risk for not progressing as planned. This policy also outlines the formal processes for academic deceleration for students who are unable to maintain the standard pace of study.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

Each student will receive a Student Advising Worksheet prior to matriculation to guide their academic planning and progression. Students who do not successfully complete a course or otherwise require a modification to their original plan of study will be provided with a revised Student Advising Worksheet in consultation with the DMS Admissions Coordinator. This revised worksheet serves as the student's formal deceleration plan. Ultimately, students are responsible for effective planning, progression, and completion of all requirements for the DMS degree.

III. DEFINITIONS

Course completion:

- To successfully complete each course, students must meet both of the following criteria:
 - o Earn a final grade of 70 (C) or higher.
 - The final course grades are recorded by the faculty as follows:
 - A = 90 – 100
 - B = 80 – 89
 - C = 70 – 79
 - F = < 70
 - Individual assignment grades and final course grades will not be rounded. The final numerical score calculated in the learning management system is the official score used to determine the final letter grade submitted to the registrar.
 - o Have no substantial incomplete coursework.
- Temporary Grades:

- In specific situations, a student who is unable to complete a substantial amount of coursework due to verifiable, extenuating circumstances may be eligible for a temporary grade. Temporary grades include either In Progress (IP) or Incomplete (I).
 - In Progress (IP) Grade
 - A temporary grade assigned for the scholarly project courses (DMS 800, 889, and 900).
 - Incomplete (I) Grade
 - A temporary grade assigned for non-scholarly project courses.

Substantial Incomplete Coursework:

- A condition in which a student fails to submit required assignments that, in total, accounts for 20% or more of the final course grade.

Deceleration:

- An officially recognized adjustment to a student's original program of study that extends the time required for degree completion. Deceleration is a structured process designed to support student success and may result from course failure, the assignment of temporary grades, or an approved modified academic plan.

Program completion (degree requirements):

- To successfully complete the DMS program, students must satisfy all of the following requirements within four (4) calendar years of initial enrollment:
 - Complete all courses specified in the approved program of study.
 - Complete a doctoral scholarly project (as outlined in the DMS 800, 889, and 900 course sequence).
 - Maintain a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 2.0 (C) across all coursework.
 - Ensure payment of all tuition and fees.
 - Have no outstanding financial obligations (e.g., parking tickets, transcript fees) to the University.
 - Demonstrate the ethical, personal, and professional qualities necessary for the continued study and practice of medicine and/or medical education.
 - Complete a Program Evaluation (Intent to Graduate) Form.

"At risk" students:

- Students will be considered "at risk" if they meet any of the following criteria:
 - Submit any assignment more than two (2) weeks after the original due date

- Score below 70% on more than two (2) assignments in any course
- Have two (2) or more unexcused absences in any semester
- Achieve a final course grade below 80% in any course
- Obtain a cumulative GPA below 3.00
- Report any self-identified barriers to academic performance
- Enter the third calendar year of program completion
- Meet other conditions as deemed appropriate by the DMS Program Director

IV. AUDIENCE

This policy applies to all LMU DMS students.

V. COMPLIANCE

Students who are at risk of not meeting, or who fail to meet course or program completion requirements will be referred to the SPC to determine the most appropriate course of action. Please refer to the DMS Student Evaluation, Feedback, Academic Advising, and Retention Policy for additional details.

Students who do not fulfill all graduation requirements within four (4) calendar years of initial enrollment will not be eligible for graduation and must reapply to the program. If readmitted, the student will be required to repeat all prior coursework.

VI. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

VII. PROCEDURES

Course Failure and Repetition

- Repeating a course constitutes a mandatory academic deceleration. The student must work with the DMS Admissions Coordinator to formalize a decelerated progression plan via a revised Student Advising Worksheet. The new Student Advising Worksheet becomes official once signed by the DMS Program Director.

Management of Temporary Grades

- A student who is unable to complete a substantial amount of coursework due to verifiable, extenuating circumstances may request a temporary grade of In Progress (IP) or Incomplete (I) from the course director.
 - In Progress (IP) Grade Procedures:

- The student and their Academic Advisor must complete and sign an [In Progress Agreement Form](#). This agreement will formalize the student's proposed timeline for revising and/or completing the work, which must not exceed the one-year deadline.
 - A student receiving an IP grade in either DMS 800 or DMS 889 must complete outstanding coursework before progressing to the next course in the series.
 - A student's graduation timeline may be delayed due to receiving an IP grade. This delay is considered a formal deceleration of the students' plan. The student must work with the DMS Program Admissions Coordinator to create a revised Student Advising Worksheet reflecting the updated expected graduation date.
 - A student has a maximum of one (1) calendar year from the end of the term in which the IP grade was assigned to complete the outstanding coursework.
 - Once the work is completed, the IP grade will be replaced by the final calculated grade.
 - If the work is not completed by the deadline, the IP grade will automatically become a failing (F) grade.
- Incomplete (I) Grade Procedures (non-scholarly project courses only):
 - A student must formally request an Incomplete (I) grade from the Course Director before the end of the term. To be eligible, the student must be in good academic standing in the course at the time of request. The request must also be due to verifiable, extenuating circumstances that will/may result in the student having substantial incomplete coursework.
 - If the Course Director approves the request, the student and Course Director will complete and sign an [Incomplete Grade Agreement Form](#). This form will specify all outstanding coursework and establish a final submission deadline.
 - The student must complete all outstanding coursework no later than six (6) weeks after the end of the term in which the 'I' grade was assigned.
 - Upon timely submission of the completed work, the Course Director will calculate the final course grade and submit a Change of Grade Form to the registrar. The 'I' will be replaced with the final earned grade.

- If the work is not completed by the established deadline (six weeks after the end of the term), the 'I' grade will be replaced with a final calculated grade based on all work submitted for the course.

VIII. CONTACT INFORMATION

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

IX. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Effective Date: August 12th, 2025

Updated: November 21st, 2025