

EVMS

**DOCTOR OF MEDICAL
SCIENCES (DMSc)**

STUDENT HANDBOOK

PUBLISHED



NOTE: This handbook reflects current institutional and program information. Information is subject to change.

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PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Doctor of Medical Sciences (DMSc) is an advanced professional degree designed to facilitate career advancement for physician assistants in clinical practice, administration, and education. The curriculum consists of 12 3-credit courses (36 credit hours) completed over two years. Coursework culminates with a written contemporary dissertation. All courses are taught online, and are typically offered in either a 16-week or 12-week format.

MISSION

To prepare scholarly physician assistants to serve as leaders and change agents in their place of employment and in their communities.

VALUES

- Academic integrity is the foundation of higher education.
- The student-teacher relationship is based on mutual respect, trust, and a desire for shared learning experiences.
- Diversity in many forms will strengthen the learning environment.

GOALS

1. Prepare professionals to effectively serve organizations and communities based on a curriculum of diverse yet interrelated topics (PG-1).
2. Encourage scholarly learning that is dynamic, reflective, and applied (PG-2).
3. Provide individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to function as leaders and innovators in clinical practice or higher education (PG-3).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Graduates will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to communicate professionally and effectively using a variety of tools (PG-2).
2. Apply key principles of financial management (PG-1).
3. Demonstrate an understanding of healthcare systems and quality improvement (PG-1).
4. Analyze organizational and professional needs. (PG-1; PG-2, PG-3).
5. (PG-1; PG-2).

6. Demonstrate leadership skills and professionalism (PG-2; PG-3).

KEY PROGRAM CONTACTS

Name	Address	Phone	E-mail
Kimberly K. Dempsey, MPA, EdD, PA-C Associate Professor Director, DMSc Director, MPA	Eastern Virginia Medical School Lester Hall, Suite 343 651 Colley Avenue, Norfolk, VA 23507	757.446.7158	Dempsekk@evms.edu
Erin Suit Program Administrator	Eastern Virginia Medical School Lester Hall, Suite 343 651 Colley Avenue, Norfolk, VA 23507	757.446.7158	SuitEL@evms.edu

PROGRAM FACULTY

Program faculty are certified in accordance with institutional policies and procedures.

Faculty	
Kimberly K Dempsey, EdD, PA-C	Associate Professor Director, Master of Physician Assistant Program Director, Doctor of Medical Sciences Program
Lauren Paluch, DMSc, PA-C	Assistant Professor
Amanda Quillin, DHSc	
Daniel Thibodeau, DHSc, PA-C	Associate Professor

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

The essential abilities and skills that candidates and students must possess in order to complete the education and training associated with the Doctor of Medical Sciences program.

OBSERVATION SKILLS

Demonstrate sufficient attention and accuracy in observation skills (visual, auditory, and tactile) in the lecture hall, in clinical and education settings, and online. Indicators include but are not limited to accurate visualization and discrimination of text, numbers, patterns, graphic illustrations, and other imaging texts.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Demonstrate effective communication skills with professionals, and with people of varying cultures, ethnicities and personalities.

Indicators include but are not limited to the following examples:

- Clear, efficient, and intelligible articulation of spoken English language.
- Legible, efficient, and intelligible written English language.
- Accurate and efficient English language reading skills.
- Accurate and efficient, expressive and receptive communication skills.
- Ability to accurately follow directions (oral and written).

CRITICAL REASONING SKILLS

Demonstrate critical reasoning skills Demonstrate critical reasoning skills, including, but not limited to, intellectual, conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities.

Indicators include, but are not limited to, these examples:

- Demonstrate ability to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate, and synthesize information.
- Demonstrate ability to acquire, retain, and apply new and learned information.

MOTOR AND SENSORY FUNCTION

Demonstrate sufficient motor and sensory function to perform typical clinical laboratory duties.

Indicators include but are not limited to the following examples:

- Execute motor movements that demonstrate safety and efficiency in the various learning settings (i.e., classroom, online).
- Physical stamina sufficient to complete the online didactic study, which will include prolonged periods of sitting.

BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES

Demonstrate the behavioral and social attributes vital to participation in a graduate-level academic program.

Indicators include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- Possess the emotional health required for full utilization of mental faculties (judgment, orientation, affect, and cognition).
- Ability to develop mature and effective professional relationships with faculty and other members of the educational and healthcare team.
- Possess personal qualities that facilitate effective therapeutic interactions (compassion, empathy, integrity, honesty, benevolence, confidentiality).
- Demonstrate impartial motives, attitudes, and values in roles, functions, and relationships.
- Ability to monitor and react appropriately to one's own emotional needs and responses.
- Display appropriate flexibility and adaptability in the face of stress or uncertainty in teaching and learning environments.
- Compliance with standards, policies, and practices set forth in the Program Handbook.

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION POLICY

Due to the fact that the DHSc program is offered entirely online through Internet access, there is no need for distance learners to obtain a photo identification badge. However, students enrolled in the program who live near the EVMS campus have the option to obtain a photo identification badge in case they wish to visit the program office, library, etc. To obtain a student ID badge please visit the Human Resources Department located in Smith-Rogers Hall (358 Mowbray Arch, Norfolk, VA 23507) between the hours of 8AM – 4PM Monday through Friday. This badge must be worn prominently at all times on campus for access to EVMS facilities.

TRANSFER OF CREDITS

EXTERNAL TRANSFER CREDITS

Requests to transfer graduate credits from another accredited US or Canadian institution will be considered on an individual basis after students are admitted to the DMSc Program.

- Graduate course credits were completed at an accredited US or Canadian institution and reflected on an official transcript;
- Transfers can feasibly occur within the seven-year matriculation limit of this DMSc Program;
- The grade earned is a 'B' or better; and
- The transfer course is approved by the DMSc Program.

All transfer requests must be made no later than the end of the first semester of the DMSc Program. Students requesting graduate credits to be transferred into the DMSc Program must submit a copy of the syllabus for the course and a Transfer Approval Request Form to the Program Director, who will

consult with teaching faculty as appropriate. The Program Director will communicate approval decisions to the student via the Transfer Approval Request Form.

Approved transfer grades are included on a DMSc student's transcript; however, transfer grades are not included in semester or cumulative GPA calculations.

INTERNAL TRANSFER CREDITS

Non-degree-seeking students taking courses in the DMSc Program may transfer up to 15 internal credit hours. A grade of 'B' or better is required for each transferred course.

Non-degree-seeking students who apply to matriculate into the DMSc Program may be granted admission for the fall, spring, or summer terms. In those cases, non-degree-seeking students must meet all admission requirements for matriculating students.

Approved internal grades will be included on a DMSc student's transcripts, and will be included in cumulative GPA calculations.

STUDENT FINANCES

EVMS Financial Services will mail an invoice one month prior to the start of each semester. Your first invoice will include tuition and student fees, less your acceptance deposit.

PAYMENTS

Tuition payments for the Doctor of Medical Sciences program must be paid by the first day of each semester, based on the total number of credit hours for which a student has enrolled. Tuition is subject to change. Please contact Financial Services at 757-446-6063 or by email AR@EVMS.EDU if you do not receive a tuition invoice or if you have questions about your bill.

TUITION STATEMENTS

You can access your financial statements at any time online using the [myEVMS Portal](#). If you have any questions or do not receive an invoice, please contact Financial Services at 757.446.6063 or by email AR@EVMS.EDU.

FINANCIAL AID

To qualify and maintain eligibility for Federal Student Aid programs, an applicant must be accepted for admission to Eastern Virginia Medical School, be enrolled in good standing at least half time, be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, be registered with the Selective Service if a male, at least 18 years old, under 26 years old, and not currently a member of the Armed Forces, not be in default on a previous

student loan or owe a refund on any Title IV funds received at another educational institution, maintain satisfactory academic progress and be creditworthy (for credit based loans). To be considered enrolled at least half time, students must be registered and attending at least three (3) credit hours per semester. Failure to maintain enrollment in at least three (3) credits per term could result in loans being returned to the Title IV granting agency and could result in a balance due to EVMS. Sources of financial aid can be confirmed by the EVMS Office of Financial Aid at 757-446-5804 or email at finaid@evms.edu or online at [Office of Financial Aid](#). Financial aid staff can provide detailed information and counseling.

FINANCIAL AID AND ACADEMIC PROBATION

In order to continue to receive federal, state, and institutional financial aid, you must maintain satisfactory academic progress according to your program's guidelines, but you must also meet the pace and completion requirements of the federal regulations. More information on the Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements are located online at [Financial Aid's Satisfactory Academic Progress](#).

ATTENDANCE

Once the semester begins, students are notified of new course openings. Students are required to log into their new course(s) the first day of the term. Information about the course schedule, such as start and stop dates, is available in Blackboard, the DMSc Student Organization. Failure to log into a course and missing important deadlines may lead to withdrawal from a course.

ONLINE COURSE PROCEDURES

EXAMINATION PROCEDURE

Some courses may administer examinations and quizzes online. Due to the differing time zones, specific time slots are allocated for each online assessment based on Eastern Standard Time (EST). Each instructor may vary the exam format (e.g., multiple choice questions, short answer, essay). Follow the instructions provided by the course instructor. For questions or concerns with Blackboard, please contact distance learning at distancelearning@evms.edu or 757.446.5051 during normal business hours.

ASSIGNMENTS

Deadlines and instructions for submitting assignments are included in each course syllabus.

DISCUSSION BOARD & OTHER COURSE ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

The Discussion Board, VoiceThread, FlipGrid, Wikis, Blogs, and Journal postings in Blackboard are types of interactions where students and faculty who have access to the class may communicate with one another. Everyone in the class engages in discussion board forums and/or VoiceThread presentations, and views FlipGrid videos. Wiki assignments are typically group projects to which all members of the class have access. Blogs are similar to discussion board forums where all class members will have access. Journal postings are only available to you and your instructor. You are responding to questions posted by the instructor, members of your group, or each member of the class. All of these types of assignments will typically have a grade associated with them. Forums like discussion boards and VoiceThread may require multiple inputs and responses throughout the module. Please check to make sure you understand the timing of posts, how many posts, and the type and depth of the post requested so that you may get full credit for the assignment.

Typically, each course has a general ungraded discussion board forum where you may ask for clarification of the course requirements. If you have a question related to something you read, chances are someone else in the class does also. If you post something and are not getting a reply, most likely no one is aware that you have posted a question. Please report this to the course director who will take appropriate action to notify others.

Please be aware of netiquette when making a post. Be respectful of each other and your faculty, avoid texting short hand or in all caps, and please behave in a professional manner.

GRADES

Grades for assignments and exams are typically posted in the Blackboard course site within approximately one week after the assessment or deadline. At the conclusion of each course and after the course survey or evaluation has been completed by all students, the course grades will be posted. Please contact the instructor if you have not received a grade within the allotted time. If you do not receive a clear or prompt response contact the Program Director, Dr. Kimberly K. Dempsey at dempsekk@evms.edu.

We ask all students to fill out an evaluation or survey for each and every course. These are anonymous questions that evaluate the course and instructors.

INSTRUCTOR RESPONSE TIME

Faculty are expected to respond to email within 48 hours. Feedback on assignments is usually provided within one week of receipt. If there are any concerns about faculty response, please contact the Program Director, Dr. Kimberly K. Dempsey at dempsekk@evms.edu.

CLASS Demeanor

Students are expected to interact in a professional demeanor with classmates, faculty, and staff. Inappropriate language, dissension, or disruption will be removed from any web posting and disciplinary action may be taken.

EMAIL

Your EVMS email account is your official means of communication with the DMSc Program, and will be used for the duration of the program. Email may be sent from within Blackboard, but it will use your EVMS email account as the sending account.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If you cannot log into Blackboard (Bb), or access your email, contact the Network Information Center (ACC), 757.446.5871, comp@evms.edu. If you are having difficulty saving or submitting an exam, call the Help Desk 757.446.5051, distancelearning@evms.edu during normal business hours or ExamSoft support from 8:30 am until 8:30 pm EST: 866.429.8889 or support@examsoft.com. After hours contact the on-call contact numbers in the order indicated at the beginning of the exam in the instruction window.

GRADING POLICIES

Students receive course letter grades using the scale below. Final course grades are calculated according to the course syllabus, and mathematical rules for rounding to the nearest whole number based on two decimal places are applied. For example, a final grade of 93.45 would round to a 94 (A), while a final grade of 93.44 would round to a 93 (A-).

A grade less than 70 (below C-) in any course is not considered as successfully passing, which means that the course must be repeated. When the course is repeated and a grade of C- or higher is achieved, the GPA will be calculated using the higher grade. The original course and grade will appear on the transcript.

GRADING SCALE

Letter Grade	Grade Point Average	Grade Scale	Grades Not Affecting GPA
A	100 – 94	4.00	Audit – AU
A-	93 – 90	3.67	Incomplete – I
B+	89 – 87	3.33	Pass – P
B	86 – 84	3.00	Official Withdrawal – W
B-	83 – 80	2.67	Unofficial Withdrawal – WF
C+	79 – 77	2.33	
C	76 – 74	2.00	
C-	73 – 70	1.67	
D+	69 – 67	1.33	
D	66 – 64	1.00	
D-	63 – 60	0.67	
F	59 or less	0.0	

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments must be submitted on or before their due date. Assignments submitted after a deadline are subject to penalties as specified in the course syllabus. If you are unable to meet a time frame for submission of an assignment, please communicate with the course faculty member as early as possible.

STUDENT PROGRESS

Student progress is monitored during all courses and at the end of each semester. Students who do not meet certain academic standards are subject to formal warnings, probation, and/or dismissal.

ACADEMIC STANDING, WARNING AND PROBATION

FAILING GRADES

1. Students must complete all coursework with a “B-” or better and an overall GPA 3.0 or above.
2. Students who fail a course by earning a C+ or below will be placed on academic probation (see below), and may be required to re-enroll in that same course at the discretion of the Program Director. If allowed to retake a course, due to the course sequence, students who failed a course must wait to retake it until the next time the course is offered.
 - a. Students may repeat a course only once.
 - b. Students are responsible for all tuition and fees for a course that is repeated.
The tuition and fees will be based on the current per credit hour rate.
3. The grade earned for the repeated course will appear on the transcript with the previously failed course grade.
4. Students unable to improve a failing grade after re-taking a course may be dismissed from the program.
5. Students who fail (earn a C+ or below) more than one course per semester may be dismissed from the program.
6. Students who fail (earn a C+ or below) more than one course during the program may be dismissed.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

1. Students may be placed on academic probation if their term or cumulative grade point average drops below 3.0.
2. Students who earn a C+ or below for a course will be placed on academic probation.
3. Students may be placed on academic probation for non-academic concerns for student conduct, professional performance, or not meeting technical standards for the profession.
4. Students may be placed on academic probation for failure to comply with the attendance policy for required orientation, program events/meetings, and or class attendance.
5. When there are extenuating circumstances leading to the failure, the student may be invited to repeat the course in the following academic year, at the discretion of the faculty and Program Director.
6. The student progress committee can review and recommend several options, including the following, to the Program Director:
 - a. Dismissal from the program
 - b. Opportunity to return to restart the program

- c. Opportunity to repeat course work
7. Students on probation or at risk for probation must meet frequently with their faculty advisor to discuss academic progress, study habits, test-taking skills, and professional progress.
 8. Students who have been found to be in violation of the Academic Integrity Standards or Honor Code may be placed on academic probation or academically dismissed from the program, depending on the results of the Honor Council investigation and/or trial. A conviction by the Honor Council will be handled in accordance with existing rules for any academic result of the conviction. In the case of a course failure related to an Honor Council conviction, the student may receive a suspension or be dismissed from the program, depending on the nature of the honor council findings and penalties.
 9. Students on academic warning or probation will meet with the Program Director to develop a written action plan.
 10. Students who do not complete academic action plans (warning, or probation) may be dismissed from the program.
 11. Students are responsible for all tuition and fees to retake courses and to fulfill requirements of academic action plans to satisfy degree requirements.
 12. The student may be notified by the Program Director in writing at the end of the academic semester that they have one semester to increase the grade point average to 3.0 or above.
 13. Students unable to increase their grade point average to 3.0 or above during the semester of academic probation may be dismissed from the program.
 14. Students on Academic Probation for non-academic concerns may be dismissed from the program if they do not fulfill the requirements of the academic action plan.

PROGRESS REVIEW

The Program Director and course instructors will regularly review the academic achievement of each student. The purpose of this review is to identify any student whose academic progress is marginal or unsatisfactory, so that the faculty and student together can develop an appropriate action plan to address academic difficulties. Another purpose is to identify students whose academic progress is excellent and may require more challenge. Student progress for those excelling and challenged will be reviewed during faculty meetings. A Student Progress Review Committee may be convened to review and document student progress or standing in the program.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Each student is responsible for:

1. Complying with evaluation requirements of each course.
2. Ascertaining their own evaluation results.
3. Seeking faculty assistance in correcting unsatisfactory or marginal performance.
4. Completing an evaluation of each course and course instructor.
5. Attending all scheduled synchronous class sessions as noted on the course syllabus.

6. Actively engaging in course discussions via discussion boards, VoiceThread etc. Active engagement includes contributing to the discussion, responding to prompts, and returning to discussions throughout the discussion period.
7. Attending mandatory program meetings as announced by the program.

NOTE: Eligibility to receive financial aid may be affected if a student is placed on academic probation.

STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES STATEMENT

EVMS is dedicated to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified students with a documented disability. The student must self-identify with the Office of Student Disability Services as having a disability to begin the accommodation process. It is in the best interest of the student to begin the accommodation process as soon as you are aware that you may need them, as accommodations are not retroactive. All students must be able to fulfill the academic and technical standards of their academic program with or without reasonable accommodations; however accommodations are made available to aid in fulfilling those standards, not to waive them. If you have, or believe you have, a disability for which you wish to request accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, you must contact the EVMS Disability Officer – StudentDisability@evms.edu. For more information about the disability accommodations process, please visit the [Student Disability Guide for Students](#) provided online.

PROFESSIONALISM & SCHOLARLY REQUIREMENTS

THE EVMS HONOR SYSTEM

The students, faculty, and administration of EVMS join together in support of the EVMS Honor Code for the purposes of providing an atmosphere of mutual trust, concern, and respect, fostering honorable and ethical behavior, and cultivating lifelong professional conduct. As a student in the DMSc program you are required to sign and abide by the EVMS Honor Code. Enforcement of the Honor Code is a responsibility that is shared by faculty and students.

Any action indicating lack of integrity or dishonesty in academic matters is considered a violation of academic ethics and the Honor Code. Such offenses include, but are not limited to, lying, stealing, engaging in or attempting to engage in cheating, plagiarism, sabotage, falsifying or manipulating data, or knowingly passing off work of another as one's own. Any student who fails to abide by the Honor Code or live up to its principles is subject to disciplinary action by the Honor Court. All students are obligated to support the Honor Code and report any violation thereof to the Honor Council. Each student subscribes to the Honor Code by signing in writing his/her support at the time of matriculation.

DMSc WRITING STYLE

The Doctor of Medical Sciences Program uses the 7th edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) Manual of style formatting and citation for all assignments. If you have a question about formatting that you need help with that is not covered elsewhere, please consult the [APA Style Guide, 7th Edition](#). We strongly recommend purchase of the: American Psychological Association. (2020). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.). Washington, DC. Work that is not submitted in APA 7th format will not be accepted.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism can best be defined as stealing and passing off the ideas and/or exact words of another as your own. Examples of plagiarism are as follows: (1) submitting work that belongs to another person or has been written by someone other than you; (2) copying from a source without proper acknowledgment, quotation marks, or both, and (3) paraphrasing from a source without proper acknowledgment. The simplest way to prevent plagiarism is to maintain proper attribution and citation techniques. As you write academic papers, you must remember to conscientiously attribute ideas and quotes when referring to the writings of others.

Students in this program are trained to:

- Understand proper ways to cite and use material from others' work.
- Know the differences between citation, quotation, and plagiarism.

STUDENT PUBLISHING POLICY

All scholarly work done as part of the requirements of completing the Doctor of Medical Science Program must be attributed to EVMS, your advisor, the program director, and your local institution. The program director serves as a de facto member of each project and should be given attribution in the presentation or publication. All research involving human subjects, must go through the [EVMS IRB process](#).

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

LENGTH OF TIME TO COMPLETE THE DEGREE

Students are expected to complete the DMSc program in two years, but must complete the program in 3.5 years. Any student who is unable to complete the program in the allotted time must submit a written plan to the Program Director that specifies a projected time frame for finishing the program.

Financial aid could be impacted by failure to complete the degree in a timely manner. Students must pass all courses and achieve a cumulative grade point average of 3.00 or higher to graduate.

DMSc – CAPSTONE PROJECT

DMSc students will complete a Capstone Project. The Capstone is an alternative dissertation format that meets the needs of students' varying career goals, e.g. scholarship, teaching, or practice. The Capstone follows Boyers' scholarship of discovery model.

The Capstone utilizes a five-part format that includes:

1. Introduction
2. Conference research proposal
3. Publishable journal article
4. Grant proposal
5. Conclusion

The Doctor of Medical Science Program (DMSc) at Eastern Virginia Medical School requires a capstone from all DMSc candidates. The capstone should be presented in a scholarly, well-integrated, properly documented manner which presents the original work done by the candidate under the supervision of the capstone advisor.

A *Capstone Guide* has been created to assist doctoral candidates and their advisor in the preparation of capstones. The primary purpose of the guide is to provide uniform standards regarding style and format.