

DOCTOR OF MEDICAL SCIENCE

The Doctor of Medical Science (DMSc) program at Des Moines University is an advanced academic pathway within the Physician Assistant (PA) program that supports learners in expanding their knowledge of leadership, health systems, and applied scholarship. The program builds on the foundation of PA education and supports both current PA students and practicing clinicians who seek to deepen their expertise and broaden their professional impact.

Students choose one of three concentration tracks in public health, health care administration, or education. These options allow learners to tailor the program to their interests and career goals while strengthening their ability to analyze evidence, improve systems of care, and contribute to organizational and educational initiatives.

The curriculum emphasizes professionalism, effective communication, and collaboration across the health care environment. Graduates are prepared to advance in their careers, contribute to improved health outcomes, and support innovation in a wide range of practice and academic settings.

MISSION

The mission of the Doctor of Medical Science (DMSc) program is to educate and cultivate compassionate, highly competent healthcare leaders who promote patient-centered care, advance healthcare education, and contribute to the continuous improvement and transformation of health systems through integrity, evidence-based practice, and lifelong learning.

VISION

To inspire a transformed healthcare future led by graduates who advance education, champion evidence-based care, and innovate for equitable, optimal health in all communities.

Values

- Integrity: Honest, ethical conduct guides decisions in healthcare and education.
- Compassion: Empathy and respect for others support patient-centered and community-focused care.
- Scholarship: Inquiry, critical thinking, and evidence use advance healthcare and education.
- Innovation: Creative thinking and system-focused problem solving improve health outcomes.
- Lifelong Learning and Professional Growth: Continuous learning and reflection support advancement of the profession.

Program Competencies/ Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the DMU Doctor of Medical Science (DMSc) program, graduates will be able to:

1. Demonstrate effective leadership by applying leadership theories, ethical decision-making frameworks, conflict resolution strategies, and advanced communication skills to lead healthcare and interdisciplinary teams.

2. Design, develop, and implement projects that enhance patient care outcomes or improve student learning experiences within clinical or academic settings.
3. Exhibit the highest standards of professionalism through reflective practice, critical thinking, empathy, and cultural sensitivity in clinical practice and academic environments.
4. Contribute to the advancement of knowledge in healthcare by engaging in scholarly inquiry, evidence-based research, critical analysis, and dissemination of findings.
5. Apply principles and applications of public health, healthcare administration, or graduate health sciences education through concentrated areas of study.

Program Requirements

To be considered for admission to the DMSc program, candidates must either be currently enrolled in the DMU PA program or be graduates of an ARC-PA-accredited master's level PA program. Applicants currently enrolled in the PA program must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 and be in good academic and professional standing. Graduates must submit an official transcript from their master's level PA program.

Program Application Process

Applications to the DMSc program are accepted directly through the DMU website, and detailed information about the process can be found on the [DMSc Webpage](#). The program conducts a holistic review of all applications, considering both academic and nonacademic experiences.

The application requires:

- Professional goal(s) statement
- Current CV or resume
- Either current enrollment in the DMU PA program or graduation from an ARC-PA-accredited master's level PA program.
 - Applicants currently enrolled in the PA program must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale and maintain good academic and professional standing.
- Graduates must submit an official transcript from their master's level PA program.

The DMSc program does not accept transfer credits or experiential learning credits.

Curriculum Overview and Outline

When following the recommended academic sequence, the Doctor of Medical Science (DMSc) program is a four-term, 30-credit online program. The curriculum includes 18 credits of core courses and 12 credits from a concentration in health care administration, public health, or education. All courses are delivered online in an asynchronous format, allowing students to balance professional and academic responsibilities. The core curriculum focuses on leadership, evidence-based practice, healthcare systems, and research, while the concentration courses enable students to develop specialized expertise in their chosen area of study.

Program Outcomes

To review the program's goals and outcomes, please visit the program's [webpage](#).

Technical Standards for Admission, Academic Promotion and Graduation

The purpose of this section is to specify the technical standards the University deems necessary for a student to matriculate, remain in good standing and ultimately achieve all the competencies necessary for graduation within their program. The University, therefore, requires candidates to confirm their ability to comply with these standards, with or without accommodation, as a condition of admission and on an annual basis thereafter.

Fulfillment of the technical standards for graduation from the Doctor of Medical Science (DMSc) program does not guarantee that a graduate will be able to meet the technical requirements of any specific residency program or employment setting.

A candidate pursuing the DMSc degree at Des Moines University must be capable of completing all core educational requirements and demonstrating achievement of the program's outcomes to qualify for graduation. The DMSc program is designed to help learners acquire advanced knowledge, leadership skills, and the ability to apply evidence-based approaches to enhance patient care, improve health systems, and foster interprofessional collaboration.

The critical skills required for success in the program are outlined below, and include the ability to observe, communicate effectively, analyze and integrate complex information, apply advanced clinical and leadership principles, and demonstrate professional behavior in a wide variety of academic and health care settings.

1. **Observation:** Candidates and students must be able to acquire required information from readings, lectures, educational materials, and demonstrations.
2. **Communication:** Candidates and students must be able to demonstrate proficiency in the English language such that they can communicate effectively in oral and written form with all members of the public health and/or health care team. Candidates and students must be able to communicate with others in order to elicit and share information. They must have the capacity for comfortable verbal and non-verbal communication and interpersonal skills that enable effective collaboration within a multidisciplinary team. In any case where a candidate's ability to communicate is compromised, the candidate must demonstrate alternative means and/or abilities to communicate.
3. **Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities:** Candidates and students must have the ability to accurately measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, problem solve, and think critically. They must also have the ability to participate and learn through a variety of modalities including, but not limited to, digital learning and communication environments, classroom instruction, small groups, teams, and collaborative activities. Candidates and students must be able to concentrate, timely analyze and interpret data, and make decisions within areas in which there is a reasonable amount of visual and auditory distraction.
4. **Behavioral Attributes, Social Skills, and Professional Expectation:** Candidates and students must be able to effectively utilize their intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, timely complete all responsibilities, and develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with others. Candidates and students must be able to professionally manage heavy workloads, prioritize conflicting demands, and function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments; to display flexibility, to learn to

function in the face of their own possible biases and uncertainties, and to not engage in substance abuse. Candidates and students must be able to understand and determine the impact of the social determinants of health and other systemic issues which impact the care of all individuals in a respectful and effective manner regardless of known or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, age, disability, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other protected status. Professionalism, compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all qualities that are required throughout the educational process.

Reasonable Accommodations

Des Moines University welcomes qualified candidates and students with disabilities who meet the technical standards of the program, with or without reasonable accommodations. Students with a disability who may need accommodations during their educational career at DMU will be asked to reaffirm their need for accommodations when acknowledging the ability to meet technical standards annually. The student is responsible for requesting accommodations through the Accommodations and Educational Support Specialist in Academic Support within the Center for Educational Enhancement. Please reach out in person, by email (accommodations@dmu.edu), or by calling Academic Support at 515-271-1516. The Accommodations and Educational Support Specialist reviews all requests for accommodations through an individualized, interactive process.

The use of an intermediary may be a reasonable accommodation while performing some non-essential physical maneuvers or non-technical data gathering. However, an intermediary cannot substitute for the candidates' or student's interpretation and judgement. Intermediaries may not perform essential skills on behalf of the candidate or student, nor can they replace technical skills related to selection and observation.

Process for Assessing Compliance with the Technical Standards

Candidates are required to attest at the time they accept an offer to matriculate that they meet the applicable technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, and annually confirm they continue to meet these standards. These standards are not intended to deter any candidate or student who might be able to complete the requirements of the curriculum with reasonable accommodations.

The University will provide reasonable accommodations as may be required by the Americans with Disabilities Act or the Iowa Civil Rights Act.

A student whose behavior or performance raises questions concerning his or her ability to fulfill these technical standards may be required to obtain evaluation or testing by a health care provider designated by the University, and to provide the results to the Center for Educational Enhancement to be considered as part of the interactive process to determine possible reasonable accommodations.

Technological compensation can be made with respect to certain technical standards, but candidates and students should be able to perform these standards in a reasonably independent manner.

Physical Health

In addition to the technical standards set forth, candidates and students must possess the general physical health necessary for performing the duties of a student in the health sciences and a health professional in

training without endangering the lives of patients and/or colleagues with whom they might have contact.

Code	Title	Credit Hours
DMSc Core Courses		
DMSC 701	Introduction to Healthcare Research	3
DMSC 702	Instructional Strategies in Health Sciences	3
DMSC 703	Social Determinants and Health Systems	3
DMSC 704	Effective Leadership Skills	3
DMSC 707	Applied Research Project I	2
DMSC 708	Applied Research Project II	2
DMSC 709	Applied Research Project III	2
Public Health Concentration		
MPH 644	Health Care Economics and Policy	3
MPH 652	Public Health Law, Ethics, and Policy	3
MPH 653	Public Health Leadership, Admin & Financ	3
MPH 687	Health Policy and Advocacy	3
Healthcare Administration Concentration		
MHA 634	Population Health Management	3
MHA 640	Health Analytics	3
MHA 643	Healthcare Law and Ethics	3
MHA 644	Health Care Economics and Policy	3
Health Sciences Education Concentration		
DMSC 715	Teaching Methods for Graduate Health Sci	3
DMSC 716	Teaching in the Digital Age	3
DMSC 717	Foundations of Academic Administration	3
DMSC 718	Seminar in Teaching and Learning	3

Students are required to complete all core courses and a total of 12 credit hours in the Public Health, Healthcare Administration, or Health Sciences Education concentration. The total credits required for the degree are 30.0 (18 core credits + 12 concentration credits).

Graduation Requirements

- To graduate, a student must:
 - Satisfactorily complete all required courses, activities, and assessments.
 - Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher based on a 4.0 scale.
 - Met all requirements for and have received the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPAS) degree.
 - Satisfactorily discharge all financial obligations to Des Moines University.
 - Submit a petition to graduate [form](#).
 - Receive recommendation for graduation by the DMSc faculty, the Dean of the College of Health Sciences, and the Board of Trustees.