



College of Health Professions
Department of Healthcare Leadership and Management
Medical University of South Carolina

Doctor of Healthcare Administration Program
Student Handbook
2019

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DHA Program Mission Statement

The Medical University of South Carolina's Doctor of Health Administration Program advances the health services leadership needs of South Carolina and beyond by:

- Providing innovative leadership techniques.
- Enabling students to engage in both individual and collective efforts to further develop their analytic skills and systems, strategic and critical thinking abilities.
- Serving as a catalyst for the students' personal and professional growth and change.

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PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

The DHA Handbook contains the rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the doctoral program. Individuals should familiarize themselves with the contents and work with faculty and program staff to ensure compliance. The most current handbook is posted on the [DHA Harbor Page](#) and it is the responsibility of each student to stay aware of current policy. All college-wide policies can be found in the [CHP Student Policy & Procedures Handbook](#)

ADMISSION POLICIES

Application Requirements & Admission Criteria

Applicants for the DHA programs must have completed a Master level degree in a track related discipline or other professional terminal degree (e.g. M.D., J.D.) Applicants must complete the online application forms, submit all transcripts, complete an essay describing the applicant's professional goals & reason for seeking admission to the DHA program, submit three professional or academic references, submit a current organizational chart of the applicant's employing organization and a current job description. Applicants may be asked to participate in a faculty interview prior to the determination of an admissions decision.

In general, applicants must have three - five years of track related experience in a health care organization, an overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 (on a 4-point scale) for graduate work is recommended and the submission of satisfactory references is required.

The DHA Program Director and Admissions Committee will review all applications to the DHA program. All notices of admission decisions will be sent to the applicant via email and include an official letter from the Dean's office.

Transfer Credit

Occasionally transfer of credit may grant exemption of courses. The student must make official *Transfer Requests* in writing to the DHA Program Director at the time of acceptance of the admissions offer. The basis of the request should be specific, i.e., course name, number, credit, date and institution. Supporting materials such as course syllabi and course objectives will be required for review by the instructor on record at MUSC. Courses will only be considered from doctoral programs that have not been used towards requirements of another earned degree and have been completed within the last 5 years.

Transfer credit may be given for a course deemed equivalent to that of the DHA course. Generally, the transferred course should be equal or greater in credit hours and academic level, be offered in a similar format with a minimum grade of B (3.0) required for transfer credit.

The DHA program will allow a maximum of twelve (12) hours in course credit from other accredited institutions to be evaluated for transfer into the Medical University. The MUSC transcript will show only total units credited in transfer without mention of grades or institution of origin.

Degree Requirements

The program requires the completion of:

1. Coursework. Formal didactic coursework will be provided in an online blended format combined with required on-campus sessions offered in extended weekend schedules (once per semester) during the first and second year of the program. The third year of the program, after comprehensive exams are passed, will be devoted to individual, supervised doctoral project research. A listing of courses and course descriptions can be found in the current DHA website and in the [MUSC Bulletin](#). Each cohort will receive a program specific curriculum schedule to include all required courses and on-campus session dates for the full duration of the program during their enrollment process.
2. Comprehensive Examination. A comprehensive examination will be given to all satisfactorily progressing students following completion of the second year's spring term. To qualify to take the comprehensive examination, a student must be in good academic standing, have no active student holds, or incomplete grades on record. The written examination will require the examinee to demonstrate the ability to effectively integrate and apply his/her knowledge to specific healthcare issues and problems. Each examination answer will be blind-reviewed and graded by faculty readers who are experts in the question's subject area.
 - a. There are two possible grades for each question – Pass or No Pass. In special circumstances, the faculty readers for a question may request that a student set up a conference call with the readers to clarify one or more aspects of his/her written answer. In this case, the grading of the question will be delayed until after the conference call. If such a clarification is needed, the student will be notified, and timely arrangements will be made for a conference call.
 - b. If a student receives a No Pass for one question, a second faculty reader will blind-review the submission. If both faculty assign a No Pass the student will be required to complete an oral examination or partial rewrite. The student will then have to receive a Pass grade from both faculty members on the oral examination or rewrite to be given a Pass grade for the question. Notification will be made in a timely manner to make arrangements by semester deadlines
 - c. Any student who receives initial grades of No Pass for two or more question after reviews by the second faculty reader or has one or more No Pass grades after an oral examination, will be deemed to have not successfully completed the comprehensive examination. Students in this situation will be required to repeat the failed portions of the examination. The Academic Progress Committee will provide recommendations and work with the student to schedule the retest at an agreed upon time. A student in this situation will not be permitted to continue Doctoral Project work until the comprehensive examination is successfully completed. Students may be permitted only one retake of the comprehensive exam. Failure to achieve passing grades on the second examination attempt will result in dismissal from the program.
3. Doctoral Project Proposal and Project. Minimums of eighteen (18) hours of Doctoral Project credits are required. After passing Comprehensive Exams and DHA 814, formal assignment of a Doctoral Project Committee Chair will occur during the beginning of the third year. The Doctoral Project Proposal Agreement Meeting must be held before the IRB review process and collection of project data can begin. See *Doctoral Project Guidelines* for more information.

Participation & Attendance

Students are expected to attend and participate all class sessions scheduled by the instructors. Class sessions may include on-campus courses, workshops, online chats, and other arranged sessions. Non-participation may adversely affect course grades at the discretion of the instructor. Refer to individual course syllabi to determine specific requirements.

On-Campus Sessions

On-campus session attendance is mandatory, every semester of didactic coursework. On-campus sessions are of particular importance to the design and value of the DHA program. These sessions are integral to professional collaboration and an enriched learning environment, all critical to the development of innovative, driven, and engaged health care leaders. If a situation arises in which attendance will not be possible, notification to instructors, the Program Director and DHA Student Services Coordinator should be made immediately. In this situation, students are advised to take a formal leave of absence (LOA) from the program for a year. This will lengthen the duration of the program and is highly discouraged.

When on-campus it is mandatory that ID badges be worn.

Time Limit / Continuous Enrollment

Consecutive terms of enrollment managed by administrative registrations are required throughout the DHA Program, except for program-approved leave of absence.

All work for the DHA Program must be completed within seven (7) years of admission. In the event that a final defense is not completed within the required time period, the student's continued enrollment will be determined by the DHA Academic Progress Committee. After a thorough review the committee will decide upon an enrollment recommendation. These could include but are not limited to any of the following scenarios or combination thereof.

1. Continued enrollment with provisions pertaining to specific milestone deadlines.
2. Continued enrollment with provisions regarding a specific defense deadline.
3. Program Dismissal.
4. Conditional enrollment based on the completion of updated coursework.
5. Conditional enrollment based on the retaking and passing of comprehensive exams.

Timelines should be regularly reviewed and discussed with your committee chair. The program will notify you the semester prior to your time-limit expiration. At that time, you can determine if you will meet the deadline or request a review.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic Calendar

A program specific academic calendar is prepared each year. The dates assigned are in compliance with the university calendar's guidelines but will not match entirely.

Registration & Records

Student services staff registers students for courses as a group prior to the start of each semester. Approximately 30 – 45 days before the semester's first day of classes a course schedule should be visible in the [MUSC Student Portal](#). If registration is prevented due to student holds, you will be notified here as well as by your student services coordinator.

A student is considered in good academic standing when he / she maintains a 3.0 grade point average for each semester of enrollment, as well as a 3.0 cumulative grade point average during the course of study.

Grade Reports

Official grades are posted to the [MUSC Student Portal](#). This is the secure student information web portal. Students will need to enter their MUSC Network ID (NetID) and password, in order to access their grades. Students can retrieve their grades by visiting *the Self-Service Menu*. Please note that the University does not mail paper copies of grade reports. Furthermore, no staff member of the DHA Program will give out information about grades over the phone or in person. Should students require grades prior to receiving them electronically, they will need to make appropriate arrangements with their course instructor.

Grading System

The DHA program follows the [MUSC grading scale as posted in the University Bulletin](#).

Turnitin

Turnitin is a solution to deter plagiarism and improve student outcomes. Students should utilize Turnitin for all written assignments prior to final submission.

In support of academic integrity and professionalism at the Medical University of South Carolina, Turnitin will be used to review the papers that you submit in class. Turnitin does not determine whether plagiarism has taken place or not. Turnitin will also not be used as a punitive tool or measure. The instructor will use the reports that Turnitin generates as a basis for the thorough evaluation of the authenticity and originality of your work and the work of your classmates.

Incomplete

A grade of incomplete (IN) may be awarded to allow students to complete coursework beyond the regular grading period of the semester as a result of circumstances beyond the student's control. All incomplete grades must have the prior approval of the instructor. The student and instructor should complete the Incomplete Grade Request Form to include all terms, expectations for the outstanding items, and due dates. Final due dates cannot extend beyond the following semester's final day of classes. The removal of incomplete grades is the responsibility of the student and should be handled by direct communication between the student and instructor. If the student fails to remove the incomplete within the following semester, it will be converted to a merit grade of 0.0.

If a leave of absence is approved while an incomplete grade remains on record the IN will convert to an WR and the course will need to be retaken upon their return.

WR: Withdrew with Permission to Return; Withdrew after the drop/add period from all courses at the University with permission to return after a leave of absence when specified time has elapsed and when specified conditions have been met; requires prior approval of the program director; may result in dismissal if terms of the leave are not met.

Withdrawal & Leave of Absence

The DHA Program follows the [policies outlined in the Bulletin](#) in regard to leaving the university and/or withdrawal from course work. These policies outline the refund schedule and processes required. See the DHA Program's academic calendar for deadlines.

Leave of Absence

After the completion of the first semester/session, any student in good academic standing may elect to take a Leave of Absence (LOA), usually not exceeding one year. Any student requesting a leave of absence must notify the DHA Program Director and supply the DHA Leave Request Form.

Upon approval the program will process course withdrawals. The student must communicate with Financial Aid & the Bursar's Office to coordinate any financial implications the LOA will cause.

Returning students shall be automatically entitled to register for the semester immediately following the expiration of the leave of absence. During registration for the anticipated semester of return an email will be sent confirming plans to enroll. Students who fail to reply with confirmation by the first day of classes will be administratively dismissed from the program and must reapply for admission.

Re-admission

Re-admission requires the student to complete the entire application process. The essay portion of the application should be replaced by a letter of explanation regarding how the circumstances during their prior enrollment have changed.

Re-admission shall be granted if the Admissions Committee finds that the circumstances have been alleviated so that the student's education can continue, and the student is still competitive with current admissions standards of the program. Completed coursework and current degree requirements will be evaluated by the Academic Progress Committee to define specific graduation requirements for a re-admitted student.

Honor Code

All students are expected to abide by [MUSC's Honor Code](#). A breach of the Honor Code is a serious offense.

Student Grievances

For the purpose of handling all student complaints and grievances of an academic nature, including course grades, the following procedures have been established by the faculty of the Department of Healthcare Leadership Management.

Any student having a complaint shall in the first instance attempt to resolve this complaint by discussing it with the faculty member or other parties against whom the complaint lies. If the complaint is not resolved to the student's satisfaction by these means, the student shall, within thirty days of the occurrence of events leading to the complaint, present the complaint in writing to the Program Director. Such complaint shall include a description of the attempted resolution with the faculty member or members in question. The Program Director shall investigate the allegations made in the complaint, take whatever actions are deemed appropriate, and notify the parties of that action.

The Program Director may appoint an ad hoc committee to evaluate the circumstances. The committee will inform all parties involved regarding the complaint/grievance. The committee will hold hearings in which all parties involved will be given ample opportunity to present their statements, views, and response to questions from the committee members. In holding such meetings, all parties must be given written notice at least one week in advance of the meeting date. In case the complaint concerns a course grade, the committee will deal primarily with the issue of consistency in the application of grading criteria. The committee may write expert witnesses to assist with the understanding and investigation of issues involved in the complaint. The committee will make its recommendation to the program director and chair that in turn will render their decision to the student. Such decisions will be communicated within one month from the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the actions taken by the Program Director do not resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of all parties, such dissatisfied party or parties shall, within fifteen (15) days of receipt of notification from the Program Director, file a written grievance with the Dean of the College.

Professionalism

DHA students are expected to adhere to the [MUSC Professionalism and Standards of Conduct for Students](#). The MUSC Honor Council handles suspected violations of the [MUSC Honor Code](#). DHA student behavior must be consistent with the [Code of Ethics of the American College of Healthcare Executives](#) and the Medical University of South Carolina Professionalism and Standards of Conduct for Students. Any function where the student is attending with approved time off from class is considered University time.

Breaches of the Professionalism Policy may be reported either anonymously (phone call or letter addressed to the division director) or non-anonymously (phone call, letter, email, or in-person meeting with the division director). The division director will be responsible for documenting, tracking, and investigating violations of the professionalism policy. Professionalism violations may be investigated concurrent with other performance issues as well as prior violations of professionalism or performance.

If a violation is reported, the division director will follow this procedure:

1. The student will receive a written notice of the alleged violation and the requirement to meet with the Department of Healthcare Leadership & Management Professionalism Committee;
2. The student will have access to any materials that will be considered in relation to the alleged violation and may have a DHA Faculty member present at the Professionalism Committee meeting;
3. The student will have the opportunity to meet with the division director and clarify any questions regarding the alleged violation and the composition of the Department of Healthcare Leadership & Management Professionalism Committee;

4. The student will meet with the Department of Healthcare Leadership & Management Professionalism Committee;
5. The Department of Healthcare Leadership & Management Professionalism Committee will make a recommendation to the Division Director, who will make a decision on the outcome;
6. The student will receive notification of the outcome within seven (7) business days following the meeting with the Department of Healthcare Leadership & Management Professionalism Committee;
7. Standard of proof will be a preponderance of evidence;
8. Per university policy, the student has the right to appeal to the Dean any decisions of the Division Director.

Failure to Meet Academic Standards

Academic Probation

A DHA student will be placed on academic probation for any one of the following reasons:

1. Earning a grade point average below a 3.0 for the semester, or
2. Failure to earn cumulative grade point average of 3.0.

Placement on academic probation is an indication that the student's performance in the previous semester was not acceptable. All students' academic records will be evaluated at the end of each semester to determine whether or not they meet any of the conditions to be placed on academic probation for the next semester. It is the student's responsibility to be cognizant of his or her academic status at the end of each semester. Any failed course (below a 2.0) must be retaken at MUSC.

Automatic Dismissal

Standards for automatic dismissal for failure to meet academic requirements prescribe that a DHA student will be automatically dismissed from his/her program of study in any of the following situations.

1. He/she meets the conditions for placement on academic probation twice (2) while enrolled.
2. If a student receives any grade of less than 2.0 in any course during any semester.
3. If a student earns less than a 3.0 in a repeated course.

Appeal Process

Any student who is dismissed from his/her program due to academic difficulties may write a letter of appeal to the Dean of the College of Health Professions. The Dean must receive the appeal within seven (7) calendar days following the student's receipt of a dismissal notice. During the appeal process, a student is considered to be maintaining academic activity and interacting with faculty.

A student disputing an action of a progress committee should appeal in writing to the college dean. An appeal must be received by the dean within seven (7) calendar days following receipt of notice by the student of the action of the progress committee or the appeal will be waived. The

dean may refer the matter to the progress committee or to an ad hoc committee for consideration and recommendation.

1. The chairman of the progress committee or ad hoc committee will provide the student with written notice of the hearing not less than seven (7) calendar days prior to the hearing.
2. During any appeal process, a student is considered to be maintaining academic activity and interacting with faculty, even if not physically present in a classroom.
3. The student must present all relevant evidence at the hearing and may be accompanied by a faculty advisor of choice.
4. The recommendation of the committee will be submitted in writing to the dean.
5. The dean, after a review of the record and the recommendation of the committee, will render a decision and advise the student in writing.
6. The decision of the college dean will be final.

If appeals are granted, conditions of enrollment will be outlined & upheld. Such conditions could include the re-taking of comprehensive exams, specific course work, etc.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Communication, Internet & E-Mail Requirements

It must be emphasized that in all aspects of a student's program of study, the student is responsible for maintaining ongoing communication with the Program and its course instructors. This includes regularly checking communications media (regular mail, phone messages, regular MUSC e-mail and Moodle postings), and promptly responding to communications from the Program, including faculty, instructors, staff and administration. If a student is unavailable for and/or inadequately responsive to communications, he/she must understand it may have a significantly adverse impact on her/his course grades and/or standing in the Program.

All students in programs offered through the College of Health Professions will frequently need to work through the Internet to complete coursework. Consequently, it is essential that all students have unrestricted access to an Internet service provider. The College strongly recommends that this Internet service be broadband and high-speed, since high-speed service is often essential for utilizing large files, graphics programs, videos and other interactive resources required for coursework.

All matriculated students will receive an MUSC Network ID (NetID) at the time of initial enrollment to the University. The NetID includes a login and password that is unique to each student and should not be shared with others. The student's NetID provides access to MUSC's email system, library resources, Harbor, the MUSC Student Portal, MyQuest training sites and a host of other student resources. It is important that students know and maintain an active NetID at all times.

E-mail: MUSC provides every student with an e-mail account free of charge. Students are expected to use e-mail as the major form of communication for program business, and each student will be responsible for seeking out the necessary training to use e-mail properly. Every student should be able to access e-mail on a regular basis. Students are to check their e-mail account several times per week, if not daily. The Student Services Coordinator, support staff, and faculty in the Medical University of South Carolina will frequently use e-mail to communicate with the student body.

To access your MUSC e-mail account visit: mail.musc.edu or [the MUSC Student Portal](#). You will then be prompted to enter your NetID login and password.

Harbor

The University uses an online learning management system (LMS) known as [Harbor](#). This platform is widely used by many universities through the world to deliver courses online, as well as, a supplement to traditional on-campus courses. All students are expected to know how to use Harbor, and to check it regularly (e.g., several times per week). A student guide is available on the College of Health Professions' technology website. In addition, there is an instructional Harbor Course that provides a variety of lessons regarding the use of this platform. All students are automatically enrolled and the course is titled "Learn Open LMS Student Edition"

Social Media

While social networking has the potential to enhance a student's educational experience, serious ramifications may arise—unprofessional behavior, overstepping boundaries, and confidentiality

breaches. Any student wishing to create an MUSC-related Facebook page, blog, etc. must abide by the [Social Media Use Guidelines](#).

Please be aware that protected confidential student and/or patient information may not be shared or posted on social media platforms. All comments, photos, or other information shared should remain appropriate and professional and should in no way infringe upon regulations as stated in FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. To read more about [FERPA](#), please visit the website of the Department of Education.

ADA Policies & Procedures

The College of Health Professions is dedicated to providing equal opportunity and access for every student. Accommodations will be made in response to the specific disability and on a case by case basis. Students are highly encouraged to make requests for accommodations before the beginning of the first semester. This gives your professors the time needed to plan and ensure you receive the accommodations needed. Please find more information regarding [ADA Services in the Diversity & Inclusion website](#).

International Travel

This [International Travel Policy](#) applies to faculty, staff, trainees and students traveling outside of the United States for University-related purposes. This policy sets forth the requirements that faculty, staff, trainees and students must meet before and during university-related travel. **For the full version of the policy, please refer to [MUSC International Travel Policy \(PDF\)](#). [Click this link to view MUSC International Travel Policy Memorandum from the Office of the Provost](#).*

Tuition and Fees

The tuition and fee rates for the DHA program are set by the State of South Carolina, and are subject to change. Current tuition and fees are available in the [MUSC Bulletin](#).

Mandatory Training

[MyQuest](#) is MUSC's learning and compliance management system. Annual training modules are required for everyone each academic year to comply with and promote understanding of federal and state laws, key policies, and regulations. Due to the severe consequences applied to the enterprise for violations related to the material covered, students who do not complete the mandatory training by the deadline will not be permitted to attend class or access courses via Moodle. All currently enrolled students, including full-time, part-time, web-based, on-campus and those on clinical rotations, must complete these training modules.

You will log in to MyQuest with your NetID and password. A collection of required training and due dates will be found here. In order to maintain compliance with University standards have trainings completed by posted dates, each year.

Other University Policies

Students should refer to the following resources for additional policies not covered in this manual. All Program policies fall within the limits set by the College and University guidelines, and will therefore be correspondingly modified by and changes made in these documents.

[Bulletin of the Medical University of South Carolina](#)
[The College of Health Professions Policies Manual](#)

EVALUATION PLANS

Course Evaluations

Distance education courses will be evaluated using the E*Value survey system. If an evaluation is below average for courses in the College of Health Professions, the division director will meet with the course instructor to resolve problems. The next time the course is taught it will be evaluated twice during the semester.

Completion of course evaluation surveys are very important to the program and we encourage you to submit this official feedback on each course each semester.

Program Evaluations

To ensure the success of the program and the provision of the type of education the program is committed to, evaluations of both the processes and the outcomes of the program will be regularly and systematically conducted. The desired outcome of the program is to graduate students who have successfully met, or exceeded, all academic requirements.

Exit Surveys

The College of Health Professions distributes an online exit survey at the time of graduation. In addition, a personal, group feedback session is conducted during each cohort's final on-campus session. Students are required to complete the exit survey in order to graduate. Plans for improvement are developed based on the outcomes of these evaluations.

HONORS AND AWARDS

The Dean's Award

Graduate students who have achieved the highest academic record at the end of the curriculum with a cumulative GPA of at least a 3.8 or above, will be nominated for a College of Health Professions Dean's Award. Recipients are presented at the Division's Hooding Ceremony.

Honors Students

Each year the Division may identify honors graduates based on highest grade point average at the end of the program. Recipients are recognized at the Division's Hooding Ceremony & Commencement.

Outstanding Doctoral Project Award

Each spring term after the deadline for Doctoral Defense presentations faculty will nominate Doctoral Projects from the past year for this award. Nominations are reviewed by a panel of faculty that have not served on the project committee for any nominee and they select an overall winner. This award is presented at the Division's Hooding Ceremony.

Alpha Eta National Honor Society

In 1975, the Alpha Eta Society, a national scholastic honor society, was created for promotion and recognition of scholarship, leadership, and contributions to the health professions. In 2009, a Chapter of the Alpha Eta Society was established at the Medical University of South Carolina, with the goal of promoting these same merits among our College constituency. The Chapter is named in memory of Dr. Benjamin F. Lawson, Dean Emeritus of the College of Health Professions. Membership in the Alpha Eta Society is awarded to graduate degree recipients who rank in the top 20% of their graduating class and have at least a 3.90 cumulative grade point average, or to graduate degree recipients who have a 3.95 cumulative grade point average or better. Members of the Alpha Eta Society have the privilege of wearing the green honor cords and insignia pins with their academic regalia.

Upsilon Phi Delta Honor Society

The mission of the Upsilon Phi Delta Honor Society is to recognize, reward, and encourage academic excellence in the study of healthcare management and policy. Membership in Upsilon Phi Delta Honor Society is open to individuals who meet the national and local standards of this organization. Graduate members must have a cumulative GPA of 3.9 at an AUPHA Member Program. Membership is awarded to graduates meeting this academic achievement at the department's hooding and graduate recognition ceremony each May.