

# Student Handbook

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## Diagnostic Medical Sonographer



NORTH-WEST  
COLLEGE

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# **WELCOME TO THE** **DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL SONOGRAPHY** **DEPARTMENT**

We are pleased that you have chosen North-West College to pursue your education in the field of Diagnostic Medical Sonographer (DMS). With your help, we shall endeavor to make our association a mutually beneficial one. We feel certain that you will share our pride in North-West College, and the respect we enjoy in the community.

This handbook has been prepared to help you understand the specific requirements and policies of the Diagnostic Medical Sonographer Program. It is very important that you become familiar with each of them.

Please read the contents of this handbook carefully. Should you have any questions, please discuss them with your Instructor or the Program Chair.

***WE WISH YOU MUCH SUCCESS***  
***AS YOU PURSUE YOUR NEW CAREER!***

**DMS Program Chair :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email :** \_\_\_\_\_

**DMS Instructor :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Anatomy & Physiology Instructor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Externship Coordinator :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email :** \_\_\_\_\_

## **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

The Diagnostic Medical Sonographer (DMS or ultrasound) Program provides students with a balanced education through competency-based training that combines didactic instruction with the demonstration and performance of practical skills. Graduates from the DMS Program have the technical knowledge and clinical skills necessary for entry-level employment as Diagnostic Medical Sonographers. Sonographers perform diagnostic studies on patients using ultrasound scanners to produce images of the anatomical areas for diagnosis and interpretation by a physician. Sonographers work in various professional settings such as hospitals, clinics, imaging centers, and mobile imaging providers.

## **PROGRAM LEARNING DOMAINS**

***Cognitive Domain***—The student will:

- Grasp the fundamental concepts of Human Anatomy and Physiology, Abdomen Sonography, Obstetrics and Gynecology Sonography, Small Parts Sonography, Vascular Sonography, and Sonography of Principals and Instrumentation, and recognize their relationship to safe patient care.
- Recognize the interdependent role of the diagnostic medical sonographer with other health care professionals and ancillary service providers.

***Psychomotor Domain***—The student will:

- Develop and apply fundamental sonography assisting skills through practice and evaluation in the clinical setting.
- Employ standard precautions and other recognized safe practice guidelines in every sonography setting.

***Affective Domain***—The student will:

- Recognize the variety of patients' needs and the impact of their personal, physical, emotional, and cultural experiences on the rendering of patient care.
- Demonstrate professional responsibility in performance, attitude, and personal conduct.
- Practice within the confines of the recognized scope of practice in the health care community to provide optimal patient care.

# **SOCIETY OF DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL SONOGRAPHER**

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

### **PREAMBLE**

The goal of this code of ethics is to promote excellence in patient care by fostering responsibility and accountability among diagnostic medical sonographers. In so doing, the integrity of the profession of diagnostic medical sonography will be maintained.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To create and encourage an environment where professional and ethical issues are discussed and addressed.
2. To help the individual diagnostic medical sonographer identify ethical issues.
3. To provide guidelines for individual diagnostic medical sonographers regarding ethical behavior.

### **PRINCIPLES**

***Principle I: In order to promote patient well-being, the diagnostic medical sonographer shall:***

- a. Provide information to the patient about the purpose of the sonography procedure and respond to the patient's questions and concerns.
- b. Respect the patient's autonomy and the right to refuse the procedure.
- c. Recognize the patient's individuality and provide care in a non-judgmental and non-discriminatory manner.
- d. Promote the privacy, dignity, and comfort of the patient by thoroughly explaining the examination, patient positioning, and implementing proper draping techniques.
- e. Maintain confidentiality of acquired patient information, and follow national patient privacy regulations as required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).
- f. Promote patient safety during the provision of sonography procedures and while the patient is in the care of the diagnostic medical sonographer.

***Principle II: To promote the highest level of competent practice, diagnostic medical sonographers shall:***

- a. Obtain appropriate diagnostic medical sonographer education and clinical skills to ensure competence.
- b. Achieve and maintain specialty specific sonography credentials. Sonography credentials must be awarded by a national sonography credentialing body that is accredited by a national organization which accredits credentialing bodies, i.e., the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) or the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).
- c. Uphold professional standards by adhering to defined technical protocols and diagnostic criteria established by peer review.
- d. Acknowledge personal and legal limits, practice within the defined scope of practice, and assume responsibility for his/her actions.
- e. Maintain continued competence through lifelong learning, which includes continuing education, acquisition of specialty specific credentials, and recredentialing.
- f. Perform medically indicated ultrasound studies, ordered by a licensed physician or their designated health care provider.
- g. Protect patients and/or study subjects by adhering to oversight and approval of investigational procedures, including documented informed consent.

- h. Refrain from the use of any substances that may alter judgment or skill and thereby compromise patient care.
- i. Be accountable and participate in regular assessment and review of equipment, procedures, protocols, and results. This can be accomplished through facility accreditation.

***Principle III: To promote professional integrity and public trust, the diagnostic medical sonographer shall:***

- a. Be truthful and promote appropriate communications with patients and colleagues.
- b. Respect the rights of patients, colleagues, and yourself.
- c. Avoid conflicts of interest and situations that exploit others or misrepresent information.
- d. Accurately represent his/her experience, education, and credentialing.
- e. Promote equitable access to care.
- f. Collaborate with professional colleagues to create an environment that promotes communication and respect.
- g. Communicate and collaborate with others to promote ethical practice.
- h. Engage in ethical billing practices.
- i. Engage only in legal arrangements in the medical industry.
- j. Report deviations from the Code of Ethics to institutional leadership for internal sanctions, local intervention and/or criminal prosecution. The Code of Ethics can serve as a valuable tool to develop local policies and procedures.

## **ORIENTATION**

All students must attend the first available North-West College orientation. No children are permitted at orientation. Students are to arrive on time and will be turned away if they are late. Students are not permitted to leave early. If a student should leave early, that student will have to attend the next available orientation.

## **SUPPLIES**

Textbooks are scheduled to be issued at the beginning of each course.

North-West College Uniforms (scrubs) are scheduled to be issued during the first few weeks of attendance. The dress code prior to receiving scrubs is business casual.

In the event that provided books or supplies are lost or stolen, the student is responsible for the cost to replace them.

Students who have any concerns or questions regarding supplies should direct their inquiry to their Instructor.

## **IDENTIFICATION BADGE**

Each Diagnostic Medical Sonographer student is issued a student identification badge during the North-West College orientation. Students must wear their identification badge at all times while on campus and each day of clinical experience. In some cases, the clinical affiliate sites may require that their facility identification badge be worn while in clinical experience instead of the North-West College student identification badge.

## **DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL SONOGRAPHER DRESS CODE**

Students who need a reasonable accommodation to the Dress Code should contact the Campus Director.

1. Once uniforms are issued (scrub pants, top, and jacket), they must be worn whenever the student is on the College campus and at clinical experience. The uniform must be clean, wrinkle-free, and in good condition with tops and pant ties tucked in. Please also refer to the Orientation Booklet for further information.
2. Plain white, short-sleeved or long sleeve, cotton shirts may be worn under the scrub top.
3. Students must wear conservative, white, non-canvas, closed-toed shoes at all times. Athletic shoes are recommended. Shoes are to be cleaned and/or polished and in good condition. Socks or hosiery must be worn. Sandals, flip-flops, and high heels are prohibited.
4. Jewelry should be minimal. For example, a wedding band, watch, and/or small earrings. Body piercings other than earrings should not be visible and spacers or gauges are not allowed during the **lab portion** or **clinical portion** of the program.
5. Tattoos should not be visible and should be covered with clothing or makeup.
6. Hair must be neatly combed, clean, and arranged in a simple style off the collar. Excessive mousse, hairspray, or gel is not permitted. Hats or hoodies are not to be worn while in the building. Hair colors must be kept within the natural tones of the hair.
7. Fingernails are to be kept clean and neatly manicured. Long nails, tips, and acrylic nails are not permitted. Nail polish is not permitted.
8. Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of personal cleanliness and present a neat, professional appearance at all times. Perfumes and/or body sprays should be kept to a minimum.

Failure to comply with all dress code requirements may result in disciplinary actions.

## **CLASSROOM RESPONSIBILITY**

Our classrooms are designed and equipped to provide our students with a positive learning experience. Intentional misuse of equipment may result in dismissal and responsibility for damaged equipment. Accidents and/or problems with equipment should be reported to the Instructor immediately. Ten minutes before the end of the class period, students, the lab monitor, and the Instructor will arrange the room to its original position. Supplies and equipment should be cleaned and stored, and chairs, desks, and tables straightened. Children and/or guests of enrolled students are not permitted to stay on campus, in the student union, or in classrooms during class hours.

## **FOOD, DRINKS, AND GUM**

No food, drinks, or chewing gum, with the exception of bottled water with a cap, will be allowed in any classrooms. No fluids or food are allowed in the laboratory areas unless approved in advance by the College administration.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Maintaining good attendance is a fundamental element of successful career preparation. Students are expected to attend all classes according to their established schedules. Frequent absences and/or tardiness causes disruption to a student's learning process and the establishment of good employment habits. Poor attendance can lead to disciplinary action such as probation or dismissal/termination.

Students must call the College or their Instructor if two consecutive class days are missed. It is advised that a follow-up email be sent to the Instructor or Program Chair as extra measure to make sure the communication was received.

Students who are absent for 14 consecutive calendar days are considered to have unofficially withdrawn from the College. A student can officially withdraw by notifying the Campus Director/Registrar before reaching the 14<sup>th</sup> day of absence. The 14-day absence timeline does not include scheduled calendar days designated as official College breaks. Please refer to the College's SAP Policy and Grading Policy for information regarding grades awarded when students withdraw from the College.

Students must maintain a minimum of 90% attendance in all scheduled clock hours of instruction in their program of study. This requirement applies to students in both clock hour and credit hour programs. The clock hour is the basis for the credit hours earned in a given course.

The maximum amount of excused absences is 10% of the scheduled clock hours attempted in the program. The student will be dismissed from the Diagnostic Medical Sonographer program if their attendance falls below the 90% mandatory attendance in all scheduled clock hours of instruction in their program of study. All missed clock hours are to be made up within the same course for continuation into the next consecutive course. Being absent for scheduled clock hours will affect the student's attendance/participation grade. The student's attendance/participation grade is not impacted by makeup hours.



## **TARDINESS/LEAVING CLASS EARLY**

Tardiness or leaving early is a disruption of a good learning environment and is discouraged. Any Student who misses more than 31 minutes of class time will receive a deduction of participation points. Frequent tardiness or leaving early without legitimate reasons may result in disciplinary action.

Students are required to notify their Instructor at the beginning of class if they are going to be leaving early.

## **MAKE-UP EXAMINATIONS**

Missed quizzes/exams can be made up; however, participation points are forfeited for that day. Students are allowed two (2) make-up exams/quizzes per course.

- Scheduled make-up exams are given before the absence or immediately upon return to class (same day). Scheduled make-ups must be agreed to ahead of the absence by the Instructor. No point deductions are taken from a scheduled make-up exam.
- Unscheduled make-up exams are to be made up prior to the course end. The maximum grade that a student can earn is 80%.

Frequent absences on test days will result in disciplinary action.

Make-up exams may not be taken during regular class time, break time or lunch time. Make-up exams are to be scheduled in advance with the Instructor. Any DMS Instructor or designated proctor may administer make-up examinations. Students are responsible for scheduling make-up examinations with their Instructor.

Lab assessments are to be taken on the day it is given by the instructor only.

Each course ends with a final exam. The final exam can only be taken on the day it is given by the Instructor. Final exams will not be given on any other day. Failure to take a final exam will result in failing the course, with the exception of documented mitigating circumstances.

## **FINAL GRADES**

A final grade for each completed course is included on the student's transcripts. Students will receive a syllabus for each course that will clearly explain the evaluation schedule for that block of instruction. Generally, each student is graded on his/her performance in class and lab, on quizzes and exams, and each course's final exam. After reviewing the syllabus, if you have any questions on grading, please discuss them with your Program Chair or Instructor.

**Students must maintain an academic average (i.e., test average) of 80% or more in order to progress in their program of study. The average will be evaluated at the end of each course.**

Anatomy and Physiology Courses:

10% Attendance, 20% Quizzes, 30% Exams, 40% Final

Core DMS Courses:

10% Attendance/participation, 10% Quizzes, 20% Exams, 20% Final, 40% Lab

## **COURSE REPEATS**

If a student's average grade for any course is below 80%, the course must be repeated. Students are only allowed to repeat one (1) course during the DMS Program. A student will be dismissed from the DMS Program if he/she receives a grade below 80% in the repeated course.

## **Criminal Background Check**

All applicants to the DMS Program must undergo a criminal background check prior to enrollment. Applicants/students with a misdemeanor or felony conviction, may be subject to denial of Program entry, externship, employment opportunities and/or registry organizations. Students with a criminal background are required to contact the American Registry of Diagnostic Sonographers and undergo the compliance application process.

## **Drug Screening Policy and Procedure**

Urine drug screening is a requirement for admission to the Diagnostic Medical Sonographer Program. Additionally, our clinical affiliates may require students to submit to additional urine drug screening as a condition of participation at their clinical site. Failure to comply with this requirement (including complying with the date and time scheduled) may result in dismissal from the Program. Urine drug screenings detect use of controlled or illegal substances. Test results are kept confidential. A positive result will lead to dismissal from the Program. A diluted drug test result will require the student to submit a retest, the student must submit the retest within 24 hours of being informed of the diluted drug test result. If a student wishes to contest the result, the student must submit to a retest within 24 hours of being informed of the positive test result. If the retest is positive, the student will be dismissed from the Program. Please note that marijuana is illegal under federal law—a positive urine drug screening for metabolites of marijuana will result in dismissal from the Program.

If you have a prescription for a controlled substance, you should contact the Campus Director/Program Chair. You may be required to provide additional medical documentation or provide consent for the College to speak with your physician. Please note, even if you have a prescription, you may not be under the influence of a controlled substance that impairs your ability to safely participate in the Program. If you have an impairment that limits your ability to take a urine drug screening, please contact the Campus Director/Program Chair to request a reasonable accommodation.

The possession, sale, or use of illegal substances on campus, at a College-sponsored event, or at a clinical affiliate is strictly prohibited. Violation of this policy will result in the student being dismissed from the Diagnostic Medical Sonographer Program.

## **SONOGRAPHY PRINCIPLES & INSTRUMENTATION MOCK EXAM (SPI)**

Students **must** complete and pass the Sonography Principles & Instrumentation Mock exam offered by North-West College prior to the clinical portion of the Diagnostic Medical Sonographer Program. The exam must be taken on campus with a DMS Instructor or designated proctor. The exam is designed to mimic the SPI exam offered by ARDMS. The exam is on a PASS or FAIL basis and is based on a scaled score ranging from 300-700. A score of 555 is required to receive a passing grade.

Students **must** complete the ARDMS Sonography Principles & Instrumentation (SPI) exam during the Diagnostic Medical Sonographer Program Course 170, Intro to Vascular. The student must provide their instructor with his/her test date, ARDMS number, and test result (pass/fail).

## **CLINICAL EXPERIENCE**

The clinical portion of your Diagnostic Medical Sonographer Program is the final portion of the Program. Only students who have met the attendance and financial requirements set by the College and who are considered competent in all areas of their studies are allowed to progress to clinical. Students must also demonstrate a level of mature professionalism which is vital to all members of a clinical team. Students who are not able to demonstrate proficient competency will not be released for externship and will be required to repeat coursework needed to improve the necessary skill sets.

In order to be scheduled for clinical placement, the following requirements must be met:

- All written didactic and laboratory work (examinations, reports, handouts, etc.) must be completed.
- Demonstrated proficiency of all required skills tests discussed below.
- A current American Heart Association (BLS) CPR Card.
- You may be required by the clinical site to complete a health screening and immunization form, including all tests and other requirements specific to the clinical site at which you will be assigned.
- You may be required by the clinical site to submit to drug tests as per specific clinical site requirements. Please note, random drug testing may be done during your clinical experience and/or class time.
- You may be required by the clinical site to have a background check prior to starting your clinical experience. For students with background issues, please contact the Program Chair immediately.
- All students must have attended a North-West College orientation prior to the externship.

### **The General Objectives of Clinical Experience:**

1. Provide the student with his or her first exposure to the clinical site or clinical environment.
2. Expose students to the demands of the clinical site environment with regard to shift work and physical demands.
3. Reinforce acquired ultrasound machine knowledge and handling.
4. Provide an environment for learning and an atmosphere for professional growth.
5. Prior to starting your clinical experience, you must attend an on-campus, detailed clinical orientation session as assigned.
6. You must submit correctly, completed, and signed documentation verifying completion of a minimum of 30 skills tests [five for each of the six domains]. Please refer to the "Clinical Requirements" below.

In order to graduate from the program, the student must have met all academic, clinical, attendance, and financial requirements.

## **Clinical Site Selection**

Placement of students at clinical depends on the following:

- GPA
- Attendance
- Student Disposition, and Attitude
- Input from Instructors
- Geographic Location

Further information regarding clinical experience assignments will be presented during the clinical orientation by the Program Chair and or Externship Coordinator. Additional information will be provided by the Clinical Liaison, Program Chair or designee, to each student prior to clinical site assignment. However, if you have any questions at this time regarding clinical experience, please make an appointment with the Program Chair to discuss them.

## **CLINICAL HOURS AND ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

You **must** complete *all* of the minimum attendance requirements listed below in order to progress from one clinical course to the next clinical course successfully.

- DMS240 – Externship I – 4.5 Semester Credit Hours  
Course Hours: 216 / Outside Hours: 0 / Total Hours: 216  
Working in the industry on a non-paid clinical externship. Externship schedules are similar to typical industry work days. Prerequisites: All didactic courses.
- DMS250 – Externship II – 4.5 Semester Credit Hours  
Course Hours: 216 / Outside Hours: 0 / Total Hours: 216  
Working in the industry on a non-paid clinical externship. Externship schedules are similar to typical industry work days. Prerequisites: All didactic courses.
- DMS260 – Externship III – 4.5 Semester Credit Hours  
Course Hours: 216 / Outside Hours: 0 / Total Hours: 216  
Working in the industry on a non-paid clinical externship. Externship schedules are similar to typical industry work days. Prerequisites: All didactic courses.

Student's must follow the assignment/work schedule as set by the clinical site and must contact the clinical site and the Clinical Instructor if he/she will be absent at least one hour before the scheduled time. Failure to provide notice will be considered a direct violation of the attendance policy. Only three (3) excused absences will be allowed during the entire clinical experience. Reporting late to a clinical site three (3) times during a thirty (30) day period will constitute a violation of the attendance policy. Request for time off may only be granted for valid reasons and will require approval by the Campus Director. Students must submit a written request at least one week in advance.

- All Clinical hours must be made up. Make-up hours for Clinical can only be made up by clinical experience and will be assigned by the Program Chair and Clinical Coordinator.
- Students who are in externship are required to keep in close contact with the Externship Coordinator, regarding attendance and/or to request a schedule change.

- Students who are in externship are required to provide the Externship Coordinator/career services department with weekly time logs, student evaluations, and site evaluations.
- The Clinical Coordinator will visit the clinical sites on a weekly basis to meet with the student and the site instructor. The Clinical Coordinator will also monitor and document the student's daily attendance and progress.
- Disciplinary action, including dismissal from the Program, may be taken if a student violates the program handbook and/or catalog policies.
- If student is dismissed from an externship site, the dismissal will be evaluated by the Campus Director, Program Chair, Externship Coordinator, and Instructor. Dismissal from a site may result in dismissal of the student from the Program. If the student is allowed to continue within the Program, he/she may be responsible for finding his/her own externship site until a total of 648 externship hours are completed.
- Students must complete 100% of the minimum clinical scheduled hours as assigned.
- Externship hours are unpaid. Students will not receive compensation from the College or the clinical site for time spent at a clinical site as part of the Program's clinical requirement.

### **SKILLS TEST REQUIREMENT**

Students ***must*** complete ***the entire Skills Test Requirement*** listed below in order to successfully advance to externship and graduate from the program.

1. Students must complete a total of 30 skills tests, as follows:
  - A minimum of five **(5)** tests in Abdominal Sonography;
  - A minimum of five **(5)** tests in Renal Sonography;
  - A minimum of five **(5)** tests in Thyroid Sonography;
  - A minimum of five **(5)** tests in Pelvic Sonography;
  - A minimum of five **(5)** tests in Carotid Sonography; and
  - A minimum of five **(5)** tests in Lower Extremity Venous Sonography.
2. Students must complete these skills tests with a passing score of 90% or greater.

### **SKILLS TEST BREAKDOWN**

- ABDOMEN: 30 minutes — 86 possible points
- CAROTID: 30 minutes — 54 possible points
- LE VENOUS: 30 minutes - 32 possible points
- TRANSABD PELVIS: 30 minutes — 52 possible points
- RENAL: 30 minutes — 48 possible points
- THYROID: 30 minutes — 54 possible points

## **PROBATIONS AND WARNINGS**

Instructors may use probation slips as warnings for students who appear to have attendance issues, conduct issues, and/or academic issues. Probation should be a warning that the student may fail a course and/or be dismissed from the DMS Program if the issues are not corrected.

## **DUE PROCESS**

Policies of the Diagnostic Medical Sonographer Program will be applied evenly and fairly as they are stated in this handbook. If a student does not understand a policy, he/she should discuss it with his/her Instructor. If further explanation is needed, please schedule an appointment with the Program Chair and/or Corporate Director of Academic Operations.

Please follow your chain of command at all times. Issues should be addressed in private with a professional attitude.

## **APPEALS**

Students can appeal College determinations, including a dismissal from the Program. All appeals must be submitted, in writing, within 10 days of notification of the violation. The student must provide supporting documentation for the appeal. Appeals will be reviewed within ten (10) business days by the Appeals Committee, under the coordination of the Corporate Director of Academic Operations. The decision of the Appeals Committee is final.



## DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL SONOGRAPHER HANDBOOK RECEIPT

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

I have received a copy of the Diagnostic Medical Sonographer Student Handbook.

I have read the entire handbook and fully understand all of the information.

I agree to abide by all rules, guidelines, and regulations contained in the Student Handbook.

I also understand that the Handbook may be updated periodically at the discretion of the Diagnostic Medical Sonographer Program Chair and can be viewed on the College's website.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



## **NOTES**