



Diagnostic Medical Sonography Information Packet

Updated 01/10/2024

Thank you for your interest in Volunteer State Community College’s Diagnostic Medical Sonography program. In order to apply to this program, you must meet the following criteria:

DEGREE REQUIREMENT

To be considered for admission to the sonography program, applicants must graduate high school with a regular diploma or higher. High school certificates of attendance, special diplomas, or the like are not sufficient for admission to this technical certificate program.

Applicants must also meet the general admission requirements for the College and **ONE** of the following degree requirements to be considered a valid applicant to the DMS program:

1. Associate of Applied Science Degree

Successful completion of a nationally recognized and regionally accredited two-year Associate of Applied Science Degree in a Health Sciences area that is patient-care related *with* clinical rotations (including but not limited to: Radiologic Technology, Respiratory Care Technology, Nursing, Occupational/Physical Therapist Assistant, Ophthalmic Medical Technician, Medical Laboratory Technology, Dental Assisting, Paramedic, or Sleep Diagnostics Technology).

OR

2. Bachelor’s Degree

Successful completion of a bachelor degree program from a regionally accredited college or university with any major (does not have to be health care related).

OR

3. MTSU 3 +1 pre-DMS program

Successful completion of the 3+1 pre-Diagnostic Medical Sonography Degree program from Middle Tennessee State University.

PREREQUISITE COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to meeting one (1) of the above degree requirements, applicants must complete **ALL** the following prerequisite courses or their equivalent.

| VSCC COURSE NUMBER | COURSE DESCRIPTION | CREDIT HOURS |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| BIOL 2010 | Human Anatomy and Physiology I | at least 4 credit hours w/lab |
| BIOL 2020 | Human Anatomy and Physiology II | at least 4 credit hours w/lab |
| AHC 115 | Medical Terminology | at least 3 credit hours |
| PHYS 1030 | Survey of Physics | at least 4 credit hours |
| MATH 1130 | College Algebra or a higher math | |

APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

Once the degree and prerequisite requirements are met, all the following tasks must be performed to apply to the VSCC DMS program. Tasks #1 - #3 are requirements of application. Tasks #4 - #10 must be mailed in one envelope to the address at the bottom of this page. ALL tasks are required to be considered an eligible candidate. Failure to complete all tasks will result in dismissal of application packet. (Items to be mailed in to create your application are indicated by *)

1. Submit application to Volunteer State Community College (<https://www.volstate.edu/admissions/apply>).
2. Send all official transcripts to Vol State's Office of Admissions.
3. Submit the "Application Form" on the VSCC DMS website (<https://www.volstate.edu/academics/health-sciences/dms/application>).

Applications are accepted Jan 1st - May 1st for the cohort beginning the fall term.

4. * Submit a completed VSCC DMS "Application Packet Table of Contents" with your application packet. (<https://www.volstate.edu/academics/health-sciences/dms/forms>).
5. * Submit a completed VSCC DMS "Application Summary Form" with your application packet (<https://www.volstate.edu/academics/health-sciences/dms/forms>).
6. *Submit a resume or curriculum vitae with your application packet.
7. * In addition to sending the Office of Admission your official transcripts, submit an additional official or unofficial copy of all college transcripts with your application packet. Please highlight the required prerequisite courses on the transcripts going in your application packet.

Note: If you are submitting a transcript from a foreign country you must also submit a translation and interpretation of all transcripts. Contact the Office of Admissions for more information.

8. * Submit a completed "Observation Hours Form" with your application packet. (<https://www.volstate.edu/academics/health-sciences/dms/forms>)

Important: The "Alternative Observation Hours Requirement" that was available from 2020 – 2023 is no longer an option for completing observation hours. You must complete a minimum of 16 in-person observation hours, and you must complete the required documentation.

Note: These observation hours **MUST** be performed within 12-months of the application date and included in your application packet.

Note: Only general ultrasound department observations will be accepted. Dedicated echocardiography, entertainment ultrasound businesses, obstetrics, pediatrics, and vascular clinics are not acceptable and will NOT meet the observation requirement.

9. * Submit an "Evaluation of Observing Applicant" form with your application packet. (<https://www.volstate.edu/academics/health-sciences/dms/forms>)
10. *Submit at least two letters of recommendation in sealed envelopes using VSCC DMS "Reference Letter Form" (<https://www.volstate.edu/academics/health-sciences/dms/forms>) with your application packet. (Four letters of recommendation max.)

Send all required application materials (#4 - #10) in **ONE ENVELOPE** between January 1st and May 3rd to:

Lisa Kirkland
 Volunteer State Community College
 Wallace Health Sciences Complex – South, S-231
 1480 Nashville Pike
 Gallatin, TN 37066

*Typically, a minimum of a 3.0 GPA is needed to be considered a competitive candidate.

SELECTION & NOTIFICATION PROCESS

1. The DMS Program admits one class annually with courses beginning during the fall term. The deadline for application submission is May 1st of any year. The applicant pool varies from year-to-year; however, we typically receive 70-100 applicants and accept the most qualified applicants every year based on a competitive admission format.
2. Up to 16 students will be offered a position in the Diagnostic Medical Sonography program cohort each year.
3. A selection committee will review applications, conduct interviews, and make recommendations on selections. These selections are based on a point total calculated from the applicant's grade point average, observation hours, letters of references, completion of the entire application, an interview score, and an evaluation of a writing sample.
4. Interviews are typically held in late May or early June.
5. Following acceptance into the DMS program, students must respond, in writing, to accept the position and confirm their intent to enroll. Accepted applicants who fail to respond will forfeit their place in the cohort.
6. Upon acceptance into the program, students must submit documentation of an acceptably scored mandatory background check and drug screening. Selected applicants are not determined to have a secured seat in the DMS program until the background check AND drug screening have passed and been accepted by the college and the Program Director.

*In an effort to comply with the recommendations of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, the majority of the major healthcare facilities and agencies utilized by the College for clinical training require that each student undergo a background check and a urine drug screening. Students seeking enrollment in this program **must** provide evidence of a passing score on a background check and a 10-panel urine drug screen prior to official acceptance/enrollment into their respective program. Either the failure to provide the required results by the due date or the receipt of anything other than a passing score will deem a student ineligible for enrollment in this program. The background check and urine drug screen are performed at the student's expense. Specific details regarding the background check and urine drug screen are given to students after conditional acceptance into the program has been earned.

** In order to provide the most comprehensive experience available to our students and protect patients in our clinical sites, our clinical affiliates require all attendees to document vaccinations. These include hepatitis B, varicella, measles, mumps, and rubella. In addition to these vaccinations our clinical affiliates require an annual

tuberculous screening and influenza shot. Depending on the clinical site, other vaccinations may be required by the time of enrollment. If you have any questions about this process, please notify the program director.

***Volunteer State Community College practices and supports nondiscriminatory recruitment, admission, and employment practices.

TECHNICAL & PHYSICAL STANDARDS

In order to perform the duties of a diagnostic medical sonographer an individual must be able to:

1. Push and pull wheelchairs with a seated patient.
2. Lean over to lock wheelchair and lift footrests.
3. Push, pull, lock, and unlock stretchers and beds with resting patients.
4. Maneuver equipment around patient beds and through hallways in hospitals and surgical suites.
5. Verbally instruct patient in a clear, concise, easily understandable manner.
6. Visually assess a patient's condition.
7. Visually assess sonographic images.
8. Interact professionally with patients, co-workers, visitors, and hospital staff.
9. Read and comprehend written communications (i.e. charts, exam requisitions, medical records, etc.).
10. Provide written communication to medical and technical staff.
11. Demonstrate manual dexterity in handling of items such as, syringes, needles, sterile items and transducers.
12. Ability to ascend and descend stairways in case of fire or absence of elevator.
13. Descend to the floor, resting on knees for performing chest compressions.
14. Use extended arms and force of shoulders and upper back to compress chest 2 inches.
15. Respond appropriately to sounds (i.e. patient voice and movements, at a normal conversational volume).
16. Respond appropriately to equipment signals such as sound, light, and color.
17. Manipulate mechanical and patient care equipment simultaneously, i.e. dials, switches, push buttons, keyboards, transducer, and blood pressure equipment.
18. Perform all of these physical standards for a prolonged period without breaks, e.g., typical shifts of eight to twelve hours.
19. Demonstrate adequate visual acuity to differentiate among the subtle shades of greys and colors used in diagnostic medical sonography.

* If you are unable to meet any of these minimum standards please inform the program director promptly so that accommodations can attempt to be made available.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I need a degree in order to apply to this program?

Yes. You will need either an associate of applied science degree in a health science field with clinical rotations, or a bachelor's degree in any field. The other option would be completing MTSUs 3+1 program. In addition to the degree requirement, all applicants will need to complete all of the prerequisite courses.

Will Vol State accept my Bachelor's Degree and/or transfer credits?

This is answered on a case-by-case basis. Most degrees from an accredited institutions will transfer. Please call the Vol State admissions office at 230-3688 for more information about specific institutions or specific degrees.

Can I still be taking prerequisite courses and still apply to the program?

Yes, we allow up to one prerequisite course to be taken in the summer term of the application year, pending approval from the DMS program director. Conditional admittance into the program might be based on earning a specific letter grade in that course.

How do I know if my patient care allied health degree is an accepted program?

Call Vol State admissions office at 230-3688 to see if VSCC accepts degrees/credits from your school or program.

Where can I do my observation hours?

You may do observation hours at any general ultrasound department in any hospital, clinic, or medical center you choose. It is your responsibility for setting up these appointments. Call the hospital and ask to speak with the lead sonographer, they should be able to assist you. Once you have completed your observation, documentation from the registered Sonographer you observed with is required. Use the form available on the VSCC DMS website (<https://www.volstate.edu/academics/health-sciences/dms/forms>). Take this form with you when you're doing your observation for the registered sonographer to complete.

When does the program start?

The program follows the college calendar and begins during the fall term.

Is it feasible to work while in the program?

This program is an intense 16-month program. Students are in class and clinical 5 days per week with a combined total of about 40 hours per week. It is not recommended students' work more than 15 hours per week while enrolled in the DMS program.

Where are the clinical affiliates located?

The program uses over 40 hospitals, clinics, and medical groups throughout all of Middle Tennessee. Travel may be required in excess of an 80 mile radius from Volunteer State's main campus in Gallatin.

Can you tell me more about Clinical training?

Clinical sites are assigned by the Program Director and/or Clinical Coordinator. The learning opportunities of each clinical site are of primary importance when clinical assignments are being made (proximity to home is not considered). Students do not choose their site and are discouraged from actively canvassing new sites. Students may suggest a site to the clinical coordinator who will then investigate any potential opportunities.

Who should write my letters of recommendation?

Previous/current employers, co-workers, instructors, mentors, teachers, and/or friends can be excellent references. (Not Mom and Dad, we know they think you're great!)

Does working in the health care environment count towards the pre-requisites?

No, even though work experience is extremely valuable, it does not substitute for prerequisite requirements. For example: working as an LPN for ten years does not equate to graduating from a programmatically accredited nursing program.

What financial aid is available?

Financial aid is extremely situational and is best answered on an individual basis by the Financial Aid office, 615-230-3456. Several opportunities will be made available for scholarships and grants while enrolled in the program.

Can you send me more information?

All of the information we might send is located on our web site. Please visit www.volstate.edu/dms or contact the program director (615-230-3339) for specific questions about the program or the profession.

What about background checks and drug screens?

Students seeking enrollment in this program **must** provide evidence of a passing score on a background check and a 10-panel urine drug screen prior to official acceptance/enrollment into the program. Either the failure to provide the required results by the due date or the receipt of anything other than a passing score will make a student ineligible for enrollment in this program. The background check and urine drug screens are performed at the student's expense. Specific details regarding the background check and urine drug screen are given to students after conditional acceptance into the program is granted.

What vaccinations do I need?

In order to provide the most comprehensive experience available to our students and protect the patients in our clinical sites, our clinical affiliates require all attendees to document vaccinations to hepatitis B, varicella, measles, mumps, and rubella. In addition to these vaccinations, our clinical sites require an annual tuberculous screening and influenza shot.

Please read this entire packet and if you have further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Lisa Kirkland, BS, RDMS, RVT
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