Diagnostic Medical Sonography Program

Frequently Asked Questions | Revised for the 2026–2027 Catalog

How long is the DMS program after I complete the general required courses?

The Diagnostic Medical Sonography program admits a new class each fall and offers three pathways: Obstetrics & Gynecology (3 semesters), Cardiovascular (4 semesters), and General/Vascular (4 semesters). These durations include the professional DMS classroom, laboratory, and clinical coursework and do not include the time required to complete general education prerequisite courses.

How much does the program cost?

The total program cost varies depending on tuition rates, fees, textbooks, uniforms, and other required expenses. Updated Estimated Program Costs sheets are always available online. Visit www.wallacestate.edu → Programs → Health Science Division → Diagnostic Medical Sonography → Estimated Program Costs to view the most current cost information.

When can I apply?

Applications for fall admission are accepted March 1 through June 1. Applicants must have unconditional admission to Wallace State by June 1, complete the online program application, and submit the required Verification Sheet and supporting documentation by the deadline. Late applications may be considered only if space is available.

Can I take DMS courses online?

The program requires in-person laboratory, classroom, and clinical participation. Some coursework may have an online component, but applicants should plan for substantial weekday attendance.

How many students are admitted each year?

The program typically receives approximately 200 applications each year and offers 50 seats, depending on clinical site availability. Admission is competitive, and the number of available seats may be adjusted based on clinical placement capacity.

How can I improve my chances of admission?

A strong GPA in the required pre-sonography courses and a strong ACT score improve an applicant's ranking. The minimum ACT composite score or superscore for consideration is 21; however, the average ACT score among the top 50 applicants is approximately 26. The catalog describes a weighted prerequisite GPA (GPA × 9) together with ACT results and completion of admission requirements. Applicants who complete BIO 202 and physics by the June 1 application deadline receive 0.5 additional ranking points for each course. Meeting minimum admission requirements does not guarantee acceptance.

Do I need the ACT if I already have a degree?

Yes. All applicants must submit an ACT score or an equivalent SAT score, regardless of prior college degrees. SAT scores are accepted and converted to the corresponding ACT equivalent for admission ranking. The minimum requirement is an ACT composite score or superscore of 21, or its SAT equivalent. Applicants must submit score documentation with the Verification Sheet.

Can I complete general required courses at another college?

Equivalent transfer courses may satisfy prerequisites, subject to college evaluation and applicable program requirements. Submit official transcripts from every college attended to Admissions and attach unofficial transcripts to the program Verification Sheet by June 1. Contact Admissions regarding transfer equivalency.

Do previously completed prerequisite courses expire?

MTH 100, BIO 201, BIO 202, and physics must have been completed within seven years of expected entry into the DMS program. Other prerequisite coursework is subject to applicable college and program requirements.

Does completing prerequisites at Wallace State improve my admission ranking?

The catalog does not award ranking points solely for completing equivalent prerequisites at Wallace State. Applicants are evaluated using the published admission and ranking criteria.

May I apply if I have not completed all prerequisites?

Most required courses must be completed by June 1. Physics and BIO 202 are the only stated exceptions: they may be completed during the summer before entry. Completing either by June 1 earns an additional 0.5 ranking point.

Are clinical observation hours required? Is there an alternative?

Applicants must complete ONE of two options: (1) document at least four hours observing in an ultrasound department with a registered sonographer, or (2) complete the Clinical Observation Alternative Assignment available on the program website. Applicants arrange their own in-person observation. The alternative assignment requires responses to five sonography-related prompts, each 200–300 words, double-spaced in 12-point font. It must reflect the applicant's own research and writing; AI-generated assignments are not accepted and will result in an incomplete application. Submit documentation of the selected option with the required application materials by June 1.

Will additional observation hours improve my admission ranking?

No additional ranking credit for observation beyond the requirement is specified in the catalog. Observation is intended to help applicants understand sonography practice and professional responsibilities.

Which CPR certification is accepted?

Applicants must provide proof of active/current AHA-approved CPR certification for Healthcare Providers (BLS). Online-only CPR certification is not accepted; training must include a hands-on component. Students must maintain current certification after admission.

What GPA is required to apply?

A minimum GPA of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale is required for the general required pre-sonography courses, with a grade of C or better in each. The GPA used for selection is calculated from these courses only.

How often do classes and clinical rotations meet?

Schedules vary by semester and pathway. Students should expect a substantial weekday commitment, including campus instruction, laboratory work, and assigned clinical rotations, plus study time outside scheduled hours.

Can I work while enrolled?

Employment is possible, but the demanding daytime class and clinical schedule can make full-time weekday employment difficult. Students must maintain the required academic performance and clinical attendance.

Where are clinical sites and how are students assigned?

Clinical education takes place at regional healthcare institutions. Assignments depend on available placements and required clinical experiences; students may need to travel beyond their home area.

Must I choose a pathway before applying?

No. Applicants submit one DMS program application and indicate their first, second, and third pathway preferences. Following admission ranking, the highest-ranked applicant receives their first choice. The program then works down the ranked list of the top 50 applicants, assigning each student their highest available preference. When a pathway is full, the next applicant is offered their second or third choice based on remaining seats. Pathway availability depends on clinical site capacity.

What is required after acceptance?

Accepted students must confirm intent to enroll by the deadline in their acceptance letter. Additional requirements include the program physical and immunization documentation, current CPR, background screening, drug testing, accident and liability insurance, and personal medical insurance for clinical attendance. **Do not complete the program physical before acceptance.**

What academic standards must students maintain?

The catalog requires a grade of at least 75% in major required courses and final examinations as specified in course syllabi. Failure to meet progression requirements will result in dismissal.

Is the program accredited?

Yes. The Diagnostic Medical Sonography program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) upon the recommendation of the Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography (JRC-DMS).

Program contacts:

Dr. April Sutherland, Program Director | 256-352-8318 | april.sutherland@wallacestate.edu

Mrs. Jorden Flack, Clinical Coordinator, Instructor | 256-352-8387 | jorden.flack@wallacestate.edu

Mrs. April Parker, Clinical Coordinator, Instructor | 256-352-8343 | april.parker@wallacestate.edu