

Application Instructions, Spring Semester 2026

Distinction in Physician-Scientist Development (DIPSD)

The DIPSD application includes four sections:

- Contact Information
- Education/Career plans
- Statements/CV—materials in this section should be prepared before beginning the application
- Mentor Information—letter of support will be submitted directly by your mentor

Note: Per [University policy](#) and [ULSOM's Honor Code](#), generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT) may not be used for Distinction Track applications.

Materials to prepare:

- **CV** (see link to template on main application page). You will upload your CV when prompted. Submit your CV as a pdf. Please use the following format for the filename: cv_lastname,firstname.
- **Personal Statement** that describes your experience in research, and how you envisage research playing a role in your future career. Use 12 point Arial font and 1-inch margins. Maximum 1 page. You will upload your Personal Statement when prompted in the application portal. Submit your Personal Statement as a pdf. Please use the following format for the filename: personal_statement_lastname_firstname.
- **Specific Aims Statement (NIH-style):** Each student should prepare a 1 page statement that summarizes your plans for the DIPSD research project. Use 12 point Arial font and 1-inch margins. Maximum 1 page. You will upload your Specific Aims Statement when prompted in the application portal. Submit your Specific Aims Statement as a pdf. Please use the following format for the filename: aims_statement_lastname_firstname. **Please use the template included on the final page of this document.**
- **Letter of support** from a University of Louisville faculty member who agrees to mentor your project through the end of your fourth year in medical school. Please note that requests to change mentors in DIPSD will rarely be approved.
 - **The Letter of Support will NOT be uploaded within the DIPSD application.** Rather, you will include the name and contact information of the faculty member on your application. You should request that your mentor directly email their letter of support to Emily Noonan (emily.noonan@louisville.edu). The Distinction Track Program will also reach out to mentors and request their letter.
 - **Deadline:** You should request that your mentor send a letter of support before the February 1 deadline as they are able, but letters will be accepted until the review and interview process begins on February 4.

After you've prepared these materials, access the DIPSD application portal from the main application page. Complete the demographic and mentor information, and upload your CV, Personal Statement, and Specific Aims Statement when prompted. Note: We recommend that you use browsers Chrome or Edge for this application. Using Firefox may cause issues within the application.

Questions?

Questions about the application process: [Emily J. Noonan](mailto:emily.noonan@louisville.edu) (emily.noonan@louisville.edu)

Questions about mentorship, research, or the DIPSD track:

Administrative Coordinators: [Rania Gomaa Abdelhay](mailto:rania.gomaaabdelhay@louisville.edu) (rania.gomaaabdelhay@louisville.edu) and [Anne Noe](mailto:anne.noe@louisville.edu) (anne.noe@louisville.edu)

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Specific Aims Statement Template for DIPSD

The Specific Aims Statement is a one-page document that summarizes your plans for your DIPSD project. Use 12 point Arial font and 1-inch margins. Maximum 1 page. This web resource provides a useful overview of what is usually expected in an NIH grant style specific aims page: [NIH Grant Applications - The Anatomy of a Specific Aims Page](#).

Title

A short, descriptive title of the research project of 81 characters or less, including spaces.

Introductory paragraph

In this paragraph, your goal should be to introduce your research subject to the reviewers and quickly capture their attention. This paragraph should describe the significant gap in knowledge that directly relates to your research project.

Second paragraph

In this paragraph, your goal should be to introduce the solution that fills the gap in knowledge. It is critical to convince your reviewers that you (and your mentor and their team) have the solution to address the current knowledge gap and the expertise to accomplish this solution. Keep your wording simple, relevant, and to the point. You will want to address the following points:

- a. What do you want to do?
- b. Why are you doing it?
- c. How do you want to do it?

Listing of your research aims

You should have a minimum of one and a maximum of three defined research aims. In this section, you will briefly describe each of the aims you will use to test your hypothesis. Ideally, the aims should be related, but not dependent, upon each other. If you do this, the failure of one aim (or an unexpected result from one aim) does not negatively influence any other aim or prevent the completion of the other aims.

Timeline

Anticipated timeline for completion of the Specific Aims of your project, from now until you complete medical school. Please be realistic in considering the time you have available to complete your research project—being over-ambitious is of little value to you and can set you up for failure. It is better to under-promise and over-deliver on your research goals.

Final Summary paragraph

The final paragraph should include the following important details: *Innovation*: Plainly state what is innovative about your project. What would completion of this proposal bring to the field that is not present currently? *Expected Outcomes*: Specifically state your expected outcomes for this project. Use plain language. What do you expect to see at the completion of each aim? Include this information only if you have not placed it in the Aims. *Impact*: State how your project will advance medical knowledge. Include a broad impact statement about how your proposal will benefit the people or other subjects that you mentioned in the opening paragraph.