

MEDICAL FIELDS

Medicine, Dentistry, Podiatry, Optometry, Chiropractic, Pharmacy, Physician Assistant, and Veterinary Medicine

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

EDUCATION INFORMATION

MEDICINE

Some Areas of Specialization

- Allergology
- Anesthesiology
- Cardiology
- Dermatology
- Emergency Medicine
- Family and General Practice
- Gastroenterology
- Internal Medicine
- Obstetrics & Gynecology
- Orthopedics
- Pathology
- Pediatrics
- Psychiatry
- Radiology
- Surgery
- Research
- Public Health

- Hospitals
- Clinics
- Private or group practice
- Health networks
- Nursing homes
- Rehabilitation centers
- Mental health institutions
- Federal, state, and local health departments
- Government agencies
- Armed services
- Correctional facilities
- Colleges and universities
- Medical schools
- Large corporations

Test Required: MCAT

Education Required: After earning an undergraduate degree, the Doctor of Medicine (MD) requires 4 years of medical school, followed by 3-8 years of internship and residency depending on specialization chosen.

Some physicians pursue the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) degree. DO's emphasize the body's musculoskeletal system, preventive medicine, and holistic patient care and often work in family and general practices, although they may be found in many specialties.

DENTISTRY

Some Areas of Specialization

- Endodontics
- Oral Pathology
- Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology
- Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
- Orthodontics
- Pediatric Dentistry
- Periodontics
- Prosthodontics
- Public Health
- Research

- Private practice (80% of dentists)
- Armed services
- Federal, state, and local health departments
- Correctional facilities

Test Required: DAT

Education Required: After earning an undergraduate degree, the Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) or Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) requires 4 years of dental school (last 2 years are clinical rotations).

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PODIATRY

Some Areas of Specialization

Surgery
Orthopedics
Primary Care
Sports Medicine
Pediatrics
Dermatology
Radiology
Geriatrics
Diabetic Foot Care

Private practice
Community health clinics
Hospitals
Residential and nursing homes
National Health Service
Sports clubs
Some specialty retail chains

Test Required: MCAT or GRE

Education Required: After earning at least 90 hours of undergraduate course work, the Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM) requires 4 academic years (last 2 years are clinical rotations). After completing the DPM, podiatrists must work a 3 year podiatric medical and surgical residency (PMSR).

OPTOMETRY

Some Areas of Specialization

Family Practice
Pediatric Optometry
Geriatric Optometry
Vision Therapy
Contact Lenses
Hospital-Based Optometry
Primary Care Optometry
Ocular Disease
Public Health
Research

Private practice
Physicians' offices
Retail optical centers
Hospitals
Armed services

Test Required: OAT

Education Required: After earning an undergraduate degree, the Doctor of Optometry (OD) requires 4 academic years at optometry school. Some optometrists complete a residency; it is not required.

CHIROPRACTIC MEDICINE

Some Areas of Specialization

Sports Injuries
Neurology
Orthopedics
Pediatrics
Nutrition
Internal Disorders
Diagnostic Imaging
Ergonomics

Solo and group practices
Hospitals or health clinics
Physicians' offices

Test Required: GRE or MCAT

Education Required: After earning at least 90 hours of undergraduate course work, the Doctor of Chiropractic (DC) requires 4 academic years at a chiropractic school.

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PHARMACY

Some Areas of Specialization

Clinical Pharmacy
Intravenous Nutrition Support
Oncology
Nuclear Pharmacy
Geriatric Pharmacy
Psychopharmacotherapy
Research
Public Health

Hospitals
Nursing homes
Mental health institutions
Health clinics
Retail chains
Government agencies including:
 Food and Drug Administration
 Public Health Service
 Department of Veteran's Affairs
 Armed Services
Pharmaceutical companies
Health insurance firms
Universities

Test Required: PCAT

Education Required: After spending at least 2 to 3 years in undergraduate coursework, the Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) requires 4 academic years. Many applicants to pharmacy school have completed a bachelor's degree.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

Most Common Areas of Practice

General Internal Medicine
Family Medicine
Surgery
Pediatrics
Emergency Medicine
Occupational Medicine
Obstetrics and Gynecology
Dermatology

Physicians' offices
Hospitals
Surgical facilities
Public clinics
Federal, state, and local health departments
Government agencies
Colleges and universities
Nursing homes
Armed services
Correctional facilities

Test Required: GRE or MCAT

Experience: PA schools typically require extensive healthcare experience; research institutional requirements.

Education Required: Complete an accredited physician assistant educational program. The majority of programs take at least 2 years to complete and result in a master's degree (e.g., MPA or MPAS). Clinical experience is gained during the second year. Some PA's pursue additional education to prepare for specialties.

VETERINARY MEDICINE

Areas of Specialization

Small Animal Care, e.g., Companion Animals
Large Animal Care, e.g., Equine, Livestock
Food Safety
Preventative Medicine
Surgery
Laboratory Animal Medicine
Research

Group or private practice
Federal government including:
 Department of Agriculture
 Department of Health and Human Services
State and local government
Colleges of veterinarian medicine
Medical schools
Research laboratories
Animal food companies
Pharmaceutical companies
Zoos

Test Required: GRE, VCAT, or MCAT

Education Required: After earning an undergraduate degree, the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM or VMD) requires 4 academic years at a college of veterinarian medicine. Veterinarians who plan to specialize will spend additional years in internships or residency programs.

STRATEGIES FOR GAINING ADMITTANCE INTO PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

- Choose an appropriate undergraduate major and include prerequisite courses required by the professional program, e.g., biology, chemistry, and physics, if they are not a requirement of the chosen major.
- Meet with a pre-health advisor periodically to discuss curricular decisions.
- Maintain a high grade point average, particularly in the sciences, to improve chances of admission to graduate or professional school.
- Develop excellent computer, mathematics, and verbal and written communication skills.
- Build good relationships with professors and/or employers in order to secure strong recommendations.
- Join related student organizations, such as Alpha Epsilon Delta pre-health honor society, and assume leadership roles.
- Obtain summer jobs, volunteer positions, research positions, or internships to test fields of interest and gain valuable experience. Participate in service-oriented organizations, medical missions, remote healthcare clinics, and the like.
- Develop a back up plan in case medical/graduate school admission is denied.
- Look at entrance requirements for desired institutions. Be aware of any standardized test requirements, minimum grade point averages, and prerequisites.
- Conduct informational interviews with professionals in your desired field regarding their backgrounds. Arrange a shadowing experience.
- Join professional associations and community organizations to stay abreast of current issues in the medical field and to develop networking contacts.
- Read scientific journals related to your area of interest.
- Research accredited institutions. Check graduation rates, success rates on licensing exams, cost, location, etc. If possible, speak with current students.
- Practice interview skills at your career center to prepare for admissions interviews.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Develop a desire to help people of all backgrounds and ages including various races and socioeconomic groups.
- Gain an understanding of the rigorous education and training required in the medical professions to ascertain your willingness to complete the required experiences.
- Study the demands required by each of the medical fields. Many professionals work long, irregular, sometimes overnight hours. Consider your tolerance for such a schedule.
- All fields require licensure that is generally regulated by the state of residency. Research requirements for your state and medical position.
- Plan for a lifetime of learning to stay abreast of new trends in the field and to fulfill continuing education requirements for licensure.
- In some medical fields, additional training is necessary for advanced research and administrative positions, university teaching, and independent research.
- Some medical fields offer the opportunity for post doctoral experiences which can allow one to gain additional training or specialize in a particular area.