

Health Professions Info Sheet

What you need to know about
becoming a

Physician (DO)

Osteopathic physicians (Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine, or DO) diagnose illness and injury, prescribe and administer treatment, and help patients prevent and manage disease. They are licensed to diagnose, treat, prescribe, and perform surgery just like MD's. DO's are different in that they practice osteopathic manipulative medicine—a distinctive system of hands-on diagnosis and treatment which focuses on the musculoskeletal system. Osteopathic manipulative medicine stems from the belief that structure influences function, meaning imbalance, injury, or other problems in one part of the body will affect function in that area as well as others. DO's use osteopathic manipulation to eliminate or reduce impediments to structure and function to promote the body's own self-healing.

Where do they work?

DO's are often found as primary care providers and have a history of practicing in rural and underserved areas. DO's can also be found in:

- Family Medicine
- Internal Medicine
- General Pediatrics
- OBGYN
- Anesthesiology
- Psychiatry
- Surgery
- Emergency Medicine

Pre-Health Advising

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Osteopathic medical students complete four years of medical school plus three to six years of additional medical training through internships and residencies. While in medical school, students will be gaining hands-on experience through clinical rotations. These rotations may include: geriatrics, psychiatry, pediatrics, internal medicine, and surgery. Courses such as gross anatomy, pharmacology, and medical ethics are typical in a DO program. These courses and rotations prepare students for their residencies as well as the state licensing exams and national boards.

Education

Entrance to DO schools is very competitive. Academic requirements include:

Biology

General Chemistry

Organic Chemistry

Physics

English

Math

Suggested courses include Biochemistry and Genetics.

DO school also require above average scores on MCAT's and a high GPA.

Accepted Student Profile

Osteopathic medical school programs have many applicants and are very competitive. Applicants should have:

- High GPA
- Leadership experience
- Excellent entrance exam scores (MCAT)
- Hands-on patient experience

Application

DO schools use a centralized application service to apply for admissions. Official transcripts and recommendations must be submitted through the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service (AACOMAS).

DO schools require MCAT scores for admission as well.

The Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) will test you on biology, chemistry, organic chemistry, and physics. These classes should be completed before taking your MCAT's.

Web Resources

AACOM Application: <https://aacomas.aacom.org/>

American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine : <http://aacom.org/>

American Osteopathic Association: <http://osteopathic.org>

MCAT: <http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/start.htm>