

MEDICAL FIELDS

Medicine, Dentistry, Podiatry, Optometry, Chiropracty, Pharmacy, and Veterinary Medicine
What can I do with these professional degrees?

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, & local health departments
Government agencies
Armed services
Correctional facilities
Colleges or universities
Medical schools
Large corporations

Test Required: MCAT

Schooling Required: After earning an undergraduate degree, the Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) 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 (D.O.) degree. D.O.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 & Maxillofacial Radiology
Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
Orthodontics
Pediatric Dentistry
Periodontics
Prosthodontics
Public Health
Research

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

Test Required: DAT

Schooling 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

Schooling 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). One year of post-doctoral residency is required in most states.

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
Vision care centers
Hospitals
Physicians' offices
Armed services
Government organizations

Test Required: OAT

Schooling Required: After earning an undergraduate degree, the Doctor of Optometry (OD) requires 4 academic years at optometry school.

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

Test Required: GRE or MCAT

Schooling 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

Schooling Required: After spending 2 to 3 years in undergraduate coursework, the Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) requires 4 academic years.

VETERINARY MEDICINE

Areas of Specialization

Small Animal Care
Large Animal Care
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

Schooling Required: After earning an undergraduate degree, the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M. or V.M.D.) 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 strong computer, mathematics, and verbal and written communication skills.
- Build strong relationships with professors and/or employers in order to secure strong recommendations.
- Join related student organizations, such as Alpha Epsilon Delta, and assume leadership roles.
- Obtain summer jobs, volunteer positions, or internships to test fields of interest and gain valuable experience.
- 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.
- Talk to professionals already 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 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

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 physicians work very long, irregular hours. Consider your tolerance for such a schedule.
- All fields require licensure that is generally regulated by the state of residency.
- 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.