

PHYSICIAN (D.O.)

ACADEMIC AND CAREER INFORMATION

NATURE OF THE WORK, EARNINGS, AND OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK

Osteopathic physicians, known as D.O.s, use all the tools and technology available to modern medicine with the added benefits of a holistic philosophy and a system of hands-on diagnosis and treatment known as osteopathic manipulative medicine. Osteopathic medicine's goal is to promote the body's innate ability to heal itself. The D.O. philosophy considers the impact of lifestyle and community on an individual's health and treat the patients as a whole, instead of treating an ailment or disease. D.O.s are licensed to practice the full scope of medicine in the United States.

Earnings and Job Outlook: The total median annual income of physicians in 2018 was \$217,000 for general practice and \$329,000 for specialists (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2018). Employment of physicians and surgeons will grow faster than average (7%) for all occupations through 2018-2028.

TRAINING

There are currently 33 accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine offering instruction at 44 locations in 29 states. Osteopathic medical school usually requires four academic years. The first two years of osteopathic medical school are geared toward the basic sciences, learning a core set of clinical examination skills, and courses that cover the various systems of the body. The last two years involve a series of clinical rotations throughout inpatient and outpatient settings where students work with patients under the supervision of attending physicians and medical residents. Throughout the four years of training, osteopathic principles and techniques are integrated into the curriculum and rotations as additional resources for diagnosis and treatment of disease. During the last year of medical school, students make decisions about medical specialty and apply for internship or residency programs in their desired area of expertise.

Following medical school, graduates begin their medical residency, which is paid, on-the-job training in a specialty. The training required varies from 3 to 7 years or more depending on the specialty selected. Students may do a preliminary or transitional year prior to beginning their residency, with some advanced specialties requiring preliminary years before beginning the official residency. Some specialties also offer advanced training in a subspecialty usually requiring an additional 1 to 2 years of fellowship following residency. Due to the Osteopathic philosophy, the majority of D.O.'s chooses residencies in Family Practice, Pediatrics, and Internal Medicine. D.O. graduates may apply to osteopathic and allopathic residency programs. [Find more on the length of residencies by specialty.](#)

ACADEMIC PREPARATION

Any major is appropriate for osteopathic medical school preparation. While a science major requires many of the same basic pre-requisites, it is not required for admission to any medical school. Students are advised to select a major they find interesting and to work at developing a broad-based, interdisciplinary foundation of knowledge and skills from which they can build upon.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Specific undergraduate course requirements vary from program to program. Requirements that differ from those listed below can be found in school catalogs or in the [Osteopathic Medical College Information Book](#) which is available for free online or in the HPAO Resource Library.

CSULB courses which fulfill admission requirements for most U.S. Osteopathic programs:

Students maintain responsibility for verifying course selection with individual programs. This is NOT a comprehensive list of prerequisites for all Osteopathic programs.

Coursework	CSULB Courses
One year of General Chemistry with lab	Chemistry 111A & 111B
One year of Organic Chemistry with lab	Chemistry 220A & 220B + 320L (Chemistry. & Biochemistry. majors) OR 220A w/ 223A & 220B w/ 223B (Biology & other majors)
One year of General Biology with lab	Biology 211 & 212 & 213
One year of General Physics with lab	Physics 100A & 100B OR 151 & 152
One semester to 1 year of Calculus (check with the school)	Math 119A & 119B OR 122 & 123
One year of English (Composition and Literature preferred)	English 100 AND another course from the English department such as: 102, 180, 300

IMPORTANT FACTORS CONSIDERED FOR SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

STANDARDIZED TEST: Students must take the [Medical College Admission Test \(MCAT\)](#) for admissions.

CLINICAL EXPOSURE: Many colleges require applicants to get to know a D.O. and request a letter of recommendation as part of the application process. Applicants should meet and spend time shadowing the physician. This provides the applicant with exposure to the osteopathic profession and enhances awareness of osteopathic medical philosophy.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION: Many programs require at least 2 letters of recommendation, although more may be recommended or required as part of the admissions process. Many schools require 1 letter from a D.O. and 1 letter from a science faculty.

ADMISSIONS: The [American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine \(AACOM\)](#) is used for applications for allopathic medical schools.

ADMISSIONS STATISTICS: The national average GPA for the fall 2019 entering class was **3.57 (Total)** and **3.47 (Science)**. The average overall MCAT score was **505.6**.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Medical College Admission Test \(MCAT\)](#)
- [American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine \(AACOM\)](#)

For more information on Osteopathic Medicine, visit www.aacom.org and see your HPAO advisor for further information on the application process, application assistance, and a list of upcoming workshops and events.