

# OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE (DO)



Osteopathic medicine is one of the fastest-growing health care professions in the country, with one out of every four medical students enrolled in an osteopathic medical school. Accounting for approximately 11% of all physicians in the United States, Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.s) apply a unique patient-centered approach to the full spectrum of care. D.O.'s practice in all medical specialties, including primary care, pediatrics, OBGYN, emergency medicine, psychiatry and surgery.

The major distinction between the D.O. and M.D. today is that osteopathic schools have a stronger focus on alternative therapies, holistic medicine and disease prevention. The D.O. receives extra training in the musculoskeletal system, which is the body's interconnected system of nerves, muscles and bones. D.O.'s use this knowledge to perform osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT), a series of hands-on techniques used to help diagnose illness or injury and facilitate the body's natural tendency toward self-healing. A degree in osteopathic medicine requires four years of academic study of which two years are dedicated to the sciences and two years to clinical rotations. Learning OMT requires an additional 200 hours of coursework.

As an undergraduate pre-medical student interested in DO programs, it is important to carefully review the prerequisite course requirements of all programs of interest as they vary. Applicants are encouraged to learn more about the profession by identifying an osteopathic physician to shadow. Academic performance, GPA (overall and science) and MCAT scores are contributing factors in the admission process; however, D.O. schools also look carefully at research experience, clinical exposure, extracurricular activities, life experiences, community involvement and leadership, motivation to study medicine, the personal statement, and letters of recommendation.

We encourage you to meet with a Pre-Health Advisor at least once a semester to ensure satisfactory progress towards your goals!

## DID YOU KNOW?

- A science major is not required. Students should choose a major based on their interests and an area that they find exciting, which at the same time, will keep them academically competitive.
- All pre-health science courses must be taken for a letter grade and earn a minimum grade of "C".
- Medical schools have differing policies for accepting AP/IB credits to fulfill prerequisites. Most do not honor AP credits. Check with individual schools.
- Some medical schools may recommend an additional upper division science course such as Genetics, Molecular Biology, Physiology, Anatomy, or Immunology.
- The MCAT is valid for 3 years.
- The vast majority of medical schools employ rolling admissions.
- There are over 35 accredited osteopathic medical schools in the U.S.
- Graduates of D.O. schools may enter either M.D. or D.O. residency programs.
- Both M.D. and D.O. physicians are licensed by the same state licensing boards and held to the same requirements for practicing medicine. Both can prescribe medications and treat patients in all 50 states.

## COMMON CORE COURSES

Students are responsible for verifying the prerequisite coursework and policies of the schools to which they plan to apply.

Course	# of Courses	USC Course(s)
<b>General Biology</b>	2 courses with lab	BISC 120L and BISC 220L or BISC 121L and BISC 221L
<b>General Chemistry</b>	2 courses with lab. Major may determine course selection	CHEM 105aL and CHEM 105bL or CHEM 107L and CHEM 108L or CHEM 115aL and CHEM 115bL
<b>Organic Chemistry</b>	2 courses with lab. Major may determine course selection.	CHEM 322aL and CHEM 322bL or CHEM 325aL and CHEM 325bL
<b>Physics</b>	2 courses with lab. Major may determine course selection.	PHYS 135aL and PHYS 135bL or PHYS 151L and PHYS 152L
<b>Mathematics</b>	1 course in Calculus is required by some medical schools.  1 course in Statistics	Calculus: MATH 125 or MATH 126 (Math 118 will suffice for BUAD majors)  Statistics: MATH 208x or QBIO 305g or HP 340Lg or PSYC 274g
<b>English/Writing</b>	2 courses	WRIT 150 and WRIT 340
<b>Biochemistry</b>	1 course is required by some schools. (Major may determine course selection).	Science Majors: BISC 330L Non-Science Majors: CHEM 350g (Fall only) or BISC 312 (Spring only)
<b>Social and Behavioral Sciences</b>	1 course in Psychology and 1 course in Sociology is highly recommended for the MCAT.	PSYC 100Lg  SOC1 200 or SOC1 210 or SOC1 242

## APPLICATION TIMELINE

The following is a general timeline from pre-application to matriculation at a medical school. More detailed information about the **Pre-Med Timeline for Undergrads** can be found on the **AACOMAS website**.

MONTH	TASK
JANUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review <b>admission requirements</b> for Osteopathic schools</li><li>Look at <b>Choose D.O. Explorer</b> for medical school information; curate a list of schools.</li><li>Register for the <b>MCAT</b> at least two months prior to your planned test date.</li><li>Choose writers for your letters of evaluation.</li></ul>
FEBRUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Brainstorm, outline, and write your personal statement(s) and Experiences, and Achievements Section</li><li>Solicit letters of evaluation</li></ul>
MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Follow-up with letter writers</li></ul>
APRIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Take the MCAT (if not already done so) or if you need to retake.</li><li>Consult Choose D.O. Explorer to confirm each school's specific requirements.</li><li>Apply for the AACOMAS Application Fee Waiver program in mid-end April (if applicable).</li><li>Register and take the <b>CASPer Exam</b>.</li></ul>
MAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Early May: <b>AACOMAS</b> application opens for submissions.</li><li>Follow up with letter writers and send thank you notes.</li><li>Finalize your school list.</li><li>Request all official transcripts from all institutions attended.</li><li>Submit AACOMAS application.</li></ul>
JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Colleges begin receiving and processing applications.</li><li>Secondary/supplemental AACOMAS application period begins (complete within 1-2 weeks of receipt).</li></ul>
JULY- AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>All letters of evaluation should be sent no later than early August.</li><li>Verify individual medical school deadlines.</li><li>Secondary/supplemental applications (cont'd).</li><li>Begin to prepare for medical school admissions interviews.</li></ul>
SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Interview and visit schools.</li><li>Secondary/supplemental applications (cont'd).</li><li>Send letters of interests and updates (if applicable).</li></ul>
JANUARY - APRIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Interviews/visit schools.</li><li>The AACOMAS application cycle closes between January and April.</li></ul>
MAY - JULY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Submit final transcripts.</li></ul>
AUGUST - SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Medical schools begin!</li></ul>

## IMPORTANT FACTORS CONSIDERED FOR SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

- Academic Coursework and Performance (Overall GPA and Science (BCPM) GPA)
- Standardized Exam: Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)
- Co-Curricular Activities and Experiences
- Letters of Evaluation: Typically 3-5 letters: two from science faculty, one from non-science faculty, remainder from professional references such as a PI or research supervisor. Some schools may require 1 letter from a physician, preferably from a D.O. Amount of letters is determined by each school.
- Personal Statement/Secondary Application Essays
- Interview Skills
- Pre-Professional Competencies:** Capacity for Improvement, Cultural Competence, Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others, Oral Communication, Reliability and Dependability, Resilience and Adaptability, Service Orientation, Social Skills, Teamwork