

MD/PhD PROGRAMS

MD/Ph.D. programs are extremely competitive, take about seven to eight years to complete, and result in the awarding of both degrees.

The first two years are devoted to the basic science curriculum taken by all medical students. MD/PhD students then leave their medical school classes and, in their third year, join an academic department such as biochemistry, physiology, immunology, cell biology, or molecular genetics to begin a program of directed full-time research which usually occupies the next three or four years. Students then write and defend a doctoral dissertation.

Next, the student re-enters the clinical training portion of their medical education and joins a new medical school class to follow the final two years of the curriculum focusing on clinical rotations and training. This is frequently condensed to 1½ years to accommodate those who finished their research program in 2 ½ or 3 ½ years.

In the fourth year of medical school, students apply for residency positions, earn a medical license, and begin their clinical training in the specialty area(s) they selected. The residency is a paid position, albeit at a minimum salary and usually requires 3-5 years.

ELIGIBILITY

Four years on campus at YU and a history of productive research in one or more labs during summers and academic years.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

All successful applicants have substantial research experience that includes both part-time experimental work during the fall and spring terms for 2-3 years, as well as 2-3 full-time summer experiences. These need not all be in the same field or at the same institution. Successful applicants are often co-authors of one or more full-length, peer-reviewed publications. For Yeshiva College students, this means a commitment to four years on campus so that you have enough research experience to apply. Summers should be devoted to laboratory work and not to taking classes to satisfy college requirements.

Most successful applicants have fairly defined research interests, which makes selecting schools much easier. Choose your schools carefully. You must earn a Ph.D. in one of the departments available at the school you attend. Do extensive web research to determine if there is someone there whose lab you would like to join. This information will be useful to formulate your personal essays and to use during your interviews.

TO APPLY 1ST OR 2ND PATHWAY

You may apply for admission to these programs either initially (1st pathway) or at the conclusion of the first year in medical school (2nd pathway). In the latter case, the Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) will NOT reimburse you for the first year of medical school expenses. (See financial information below.)

At most schools, the application process is more complicated than is the case for a medical school application. This usually involves writing two or three detailed personal statements in addition to the one that is often part of some secondary applications.

You will be expected to explain why you want to enter MD/Ph.D. programs and what your plans are should you not be accepted.

You will be expected to know about each school's faculty members and their research areas in detail (from web research). There may be several whose research parallels or overlaps your own. The interviews often occupy more than one day.

These programs are suitable for students who anticipate doing research as a major part of their future careers. Many eventually obtain full time faculty positions at medical schools throughout the U.S. They have clinical responsibilities at affiliated hospitals, run research laboratories, and are expected to obtain outside grant support from federal and private sources. You are obligated to complete the entire program, earning both the MD and PhD degrees. Failure to do so will result in having to repay all of the funds used to provide stipends and tuition payments.

FUNDING

Most of these programs are funded by the U.S. government under the Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP). Others may have limited private funding sources. All tuition and fees are covered, and each student also receives a stipend that covers their living expenses. When government funding is involved, you must be either a U.S. citizen or permanent resident to qualify.

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