

YOUR OPTIONS



As you consider your future, be sure to meet with the Pre-Health Advisor to discuss various options available to you besides the MD degree. Take this time to explore the benefits of each profession to see which might be a good fit for you.

These include:

- Osteopathic
- Physical Therapy
- Physician Assistant
- Optometry
- Podiatry
- Veterinary Medicine

OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

Osteopathic—as opposed to allopathic—medicine is a distinct form of medical practice in the United States. Osteopathic medicine provides all of the benefits of modern medicine including prescription drugs, surgery, and the use of technology to diagnose disease and evaluate injury. It also offers the added benefit of hands-on diagnosis and treatment through a system of therapy known as osteopathic manipulative medicine. Osteopathic medicine emphasizes helping each person achieve a high level of wellness by focusing on health promotion and disease prevention.

Osteopathic Philosophy

DOs are trained to look at the whole person from their first days of medical school, which means they see each person as more than just a collection of organ systems and body parts that may become injured or diseased. This holistic approach to patient care means that osteopathic medical students learn how to integrate the patient into the health care process as a partner. They are trained to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds, and they get the opportunity to practice these skills in their classrooms and learning laboratories, frequently with standardized and simulated patients.

Osteopathic applicants still are still required to take the same undergraduate courses as allopathic applications, as well as taking the MCAT. DO students are required to shadow a DO practitioner as part of their application.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Who Are Physical Therapists?

Physical therapists (PTs) examine individual patients and develop a treatment plan to promote the ability to move, reduce pain, restore function, and prevent disability. In addition, PTs work with other health care professionals to prevent the loss of mobility before it occurs by developing fitness- and wellness-oriented programs for healthier and more active lifestyles.

Where Do Physical Therapists Practice?

Although many physical therapists practice in hospitals, more than 80 percent practice in:

- Outpatient clinics or offices
- Inpatient rehabilitation facilities
- Skilled nursing, extended care, or subacute facilities
- Homes
- Education or research centers
- Schools
- Hospices
- Industrial, workplace, or other occupational environments
- Fitness centers and sports training facilities

The Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS)

The Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS) is a service of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). PTCAS allows applicants to use a single application and one set of materials to apply to multiple PT programs. Visit www.ptcas.org.

Educational Requirements

The course requirements differ for each program. For a complete list, visit <http://www.ptcas.org/uploadedFiles/PTCASorg/Directory/Prerequisites/PTCASCoursePrereqsSummary.pdf>

These are general guidelines:

ANATOMY AND/OR PHYSIOLOGY (2 semesters)
BIOLOGY (2 semesters)
CHEMISTRY (with lab) (2 semesters)
PHYSICS (not calculus based) (2 semesters)
SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES (psychology, sociology)
STATISTICS (math stats, psychology stats, biostatistics or business statistics)

Other Requirements

Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) Test
4 letters of recommendation (1 Science, 1 shadow, 1 extra)

PT Observation Hours

State licensure is required in each state in which a physical therapist practices.

Application Deadlines

Deadlines vary greatly from program to program (anytime from October through May.) For a complete list by university visit:

<http://www.ptcas.org/ptcas/public/deadlines.aspx?listorder=name%20%20&navID=10737426787>

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

A PA is a nationally certified and state-licensed medical professional.

PAs practice medicine on healthcare teams with physicians and other providers. They practice and prescribe medication in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the majority of the U.S. territories and the uniformed services.

PAs can:

- Take your medical history
- Conduct physical exams
- Diagnose and treat illnesses
- Order and interpret tests
- Develop treatment plans
- Counsel on preventive care
- Assist in surgery
- Write prescriptions
- Make rounds in hospitals and nursing homes

PAs specific duties depend on:

- The setting in which they work
- Their level of experience
- Their specialty
- State laws

<https://www.aapa.org/what-is-a-pa/>

Updated: September 9, 2016