

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. This modality can be used to relieve discomfort or musculoskeletal abnormality associated with a number of disorders including: asthma, sinus disorder, carpal tunnel, migraines, and menstrual pain. 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 to treat the patients as a whole, instead of treating an ailment or disease. Osteopathic medicine is growing with 74,000 active D.O.s currently in the U.S., and 20% of U.S. medical students are attending an osteopathic medical school. D.O.s are licensed to practice the full scope of medicine in the United States (as well as more than 65 countries abroad). D.O.s can choose any specialty, prescribe drugs, perform surgeries, and practice medicine. Though earnings vary according to number of years in practice, type of practice, geographical location, and specialty, the average annual income of physicians can range from \$140,000 - \$300,000. Employment of physicians and surgeons will grow faster than average for all occupations through 2022 as a result of current doctor's retiring, the continued expansion of the healthcare industries, and an aging population.

MEDICAL SCHOOL

There are currently 33 accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine offering instruction at 44 locations in 29 states. Six of the colleges are publically controlled, and 27 are private institution. 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.

RESIDENCY AND FELLOWSHIP TRAINING

Following medical school, graduates begin their graduate medical education or residency, which is paid on-the-job training, in a specialty. The years of training required are between 3 and 7, depending on the specialty that is selected. Due to the Osteopathic philosophy, the majority of D.O.'s choose residencies in Family Practice, Pediatrics, and Internal Medicine (which requires 3 years of training). Training in Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pathology, Anesthesiology, Dermatology, Neurology, Nuclear Medicine, Ophthalmology, Physical Medicine, Psychiatry, Radiology and Radiation Oncology is four years. The surgical specialties including General, Neurological, Orthopedic, Otolaryngology, and Urology require five years of residency. Most specialties also offer advanced training in a subspecialty usually requiring an additional one to two years of fellowship following residency. D.O. graduates may apply to osteopathic and allopathic residency programs.

PRE-MEDICAL PREPARATION

Due to the competitive nature of the medical school application process and rigorous training required, students should carefully consider their motivation and preparation for a career in medicine. Osteopathic medical schools are looking for an academic record that indicates the aptitude and knowledge base needed to successfully complete the medical school curriculum. In 2016, a total of 20,720 applicants applied to osteopathic medical schools for 6,592 seats. The entering class of 2016 had a mean science GPA of 3.45, a mean non-science GPA of 3.61 and a mean overall GPA of 3.55. The average MCAT score was 499.32. The class was 43% female, 57% male, and the median age was 24.

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	Units
One year of General Chemistry with lab	Chemistry 111A & 111B	5, 5
One year of Organic Chemistry with lab	Chemistry 220A & 220B + 320L (Chemistry. & Biochemistry. majors) OR 220A w/ 223A & 220B w/ 223B (Biology & other majors)	4, 4
One year of General Biology with lab	Biology 211 & 212 & 213	4, 4
One year of General Physics with lab	Physics 100A & 100B OR 151 & 152	4, 4
One semester to 1 year of Calculus (check with the school)	Math 119A & 119B OR 122 & 123	3 - 4
One year of English (Composition and Literature preferred)	English 100 AND another course from the English department such as: 102, 180, 300	3, 3

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.