



## What is Medical School?

Medical school is a four-year, doctorate-level program in which students learn the science of medicine and patient care. After completing a bachelor’s degree and prerequisites from a regionally accredited college or university, as well as taking the MCAT exam, students can enter Medical School, followed by a three to seven year period of supervision known as Residency.

## What should I know about Medical School?

In the U.S., students attend either an Allopathic (Medical Doctor, M.D.) or Osteopathic (Doctor of Osteopathy, D.O.) Medical college. Both see patients, both manage patient care, and both compete for the same residency positions. A physician from an Allopathic college is generally more focused on symptom management when seeing a patient. In contrast, a physician from an Osteopathic college tends to practice a more of a holistic type of medicine, focusing on the whole patient.

## Related Fields

Podiatry	Naturopathic Medicine
Physical Therapy	Occupational Therapy
Nursing/Nurse Practitioner	Laboratory Medicine
Public or Environmental Hlth	Health Management
Chiropractic Medicine	Physician Assistant
Optometry	Neuro Psychology

## Where can I study Medicine?

Washington State currently has two M.D. programs (UW School of Medicine in Seattle, [www.uwmedicine.org/education](http://www.uwmedicine.org/education), and WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine in Spokane, [medicine.wsu.edu/](http://medicine.wsu.edu/)) and one D.O. program (Pacific Northwest University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Yakima, [www.pnwu.edu/](http://www.pnwu.edu/)). Currently there are approximately 141 M.D.-granting and 31 D.O.-granting medical institutions around the United States.

## How do I get started?

While considering preparing for and attending Medical school, you should seriously and truthfully think about these questions and others: Is medicine the only profession you could ever see yourself doing? Do you understand that you may go into substantial debt in order to pursue this dream? Can you accept that you might need to make sacrifices to prepare for, and possibly more while in, Medical school? While answering these questions, students pursuing Medical school can remember the acronym “S-T-A-R-T”.

### Shadow

Shadowing is the act of working with, and observing a current physician practicing in a clinical setting. Often this can occur in a private practice, hospital, or possibly experiential trip. Shadowing is an important part of becoming a well-rounded and competitive applicant. One of the main purposes of shadowing is to help students become more aware of what it means to be a physician. Students will often work with physicians in a variety of settings and specialties in order to gain a better sense of the day-to-day life of a physician. Shadowing opportunities are out there but they can be hard to find and often students may find the most success by contacting their own physician or via programs run through pre-professional health clubs or internships. One useful resource you can use is the AAMC shadowing webpage: [students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/shadowing-doctor/](http://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/shadowing-doctor/).

### Talk

Talk to someone! As a student interested in going to Medical school, a large part of your time should be spent learning as much as possible about the opportunities available to you to develop as a student. Working with your adviser, instructors, and classmates can all be incredibly helpful in helping connect you with the resources you will need. A large part of being a physician is being able to work as part of an intricate team, and being able to rely on your expertise as well as the skills and expertise of others. Therefore, get started utilizing these skills early by consulting with friends, attending campus info sessions, being involved in our pre-health community here on campus, etc. A great online resource to learn more about Medical school as an educational pathway and a career is [wois.org](http://wois.org) (please see the Career Center in the B building for the site key), and the AAMC website: [www.aamc.org/](http://www.aamc.org/).

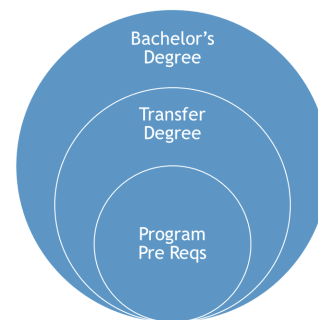
## Academics

Applying to a medical school requires that you have a bachelor's degree and all of the **prerequisites** necessary. Every school will have slightly different prerequisite requirements, but in general you will complete the following courses: *(as a community college student, it is suggested that you consider completing the courses within the dotted grey boxes at your college prior to transferring to a university)*:

Common Medical School Prerequisites	BC Course Equivalents (see Note 1)	Notes to consider:
◆ One year of General Chemistry	CHEM 161, 162, 163	<b>1.</b> It is generally recommended that students not take all of the year-long science sequences at a community college. If possible, students should take at least one or two sequences at a university. <b>2.</b> It is recommended that students take entire science sequences at one college/university. <b>3.</b> Prerequisites are subject to differ depending on desired Medical school. Do your research! <b>4.</b> Depending on the Medical school, science and math classes can "expire" in 7-10 years.
◆ One year of Biology	BIOL 211, 212, 213	
◆ One year of Organic Chemistry	CHEM 261, 262, 263	
◆ One year of Physics	PHYS 114, 115, 116 (121, 122, 123)	
◆ Biochemistry	CHEM 405, 406	
◆ 1-2 quarters of Calculus	MATH 151, 152	
◆ 2-3 quarters of English Comp and/or Lit	ENGL 101, 201, 235, other	
◆ Social and Behavior Sciences ( <i>varies</i> )	SOC, PSYC, PHIL, CMST, ANTH, etc	
◆ <i>Statistics (often recommend; sometimes required)</i>	<i>Math 130/BA 240</i>	
◆ <i>Anatomy and Physiology (recommended)</i>	<i>BIOL 241, 242</i>	

In addition to the above prerequisite courses, please consider the following:

- Most universities do not offer a bachelors degree in "Pre-Med", though some have Pre-Professional school concentrations or options, focusing on necessary prerequisites.
- There is no particular major that "looks good" to a Medical school. You can major in whatever you would like and still be a competitive applicant. However, many students try and take the majority of their Medical school prerequisites as part of their bachelors degree (see diagram). Thus Biology, Microbiology, Biochemistry, Laboratory Medicine, Environmental Science, and other Life Science majors tend to be popular major choices.



## Research

It is critical to thoroughly research the Medical schools you wish to apply to. Since there are two different types of Medical schools in the U.S., understanding which style fits you is important. Generally speaking, students will apply to 10-20 schools per application cycle. Each school will likely have a slightly different set of prerequisite courses they require, as well as varying curriculum. Therefore, it is important that you have a clear vision of the type of education and experience you will want as both an undergraduate and a Medical school student. To begin gaining useful information, attend information sessions early, make connections with the physicians you shadow, and explore university and Medical school websites. One resource for learning about how to prepare for Medical school is the AAMC website: [students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/preparing-med-school/](https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/preparing-med-school/).

## Test

All students applying to Medical school must take the Medical College Admissions Test (the MCAT). The MCAT covers a variety of biological, behavioral, chemical, and physical sciences. The MCAT is taken a few months (approx. May) before Medical school Primary Applications are submitted (opens early June, <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/apply-to-med-school-with-amcas/>), usually one year prior to when the student is hoping to enroll in Medical school. Students may take the MCAT up to 3 times in a year (7 total attempts), and all graded scores are sent to Medical schools applied to. More information about the MCAT can be found on the AAMC website: [students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/taking-mcat-exam/](https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/taking-mcat-exam/).

## What should I do now?

Students interested in getting started on the path toward Medical school can use a variety of resources at Bellevue College. The Docs and Dents Club here on campus is an excellent resource. Also, you should plan on meeting with an adviser. You can make an appointment with the Science Division/Pre-Professional Health advisor by contacting the Academic Advising front desk located on the second floor of the B building (or by calling 425-564-2212), or through the Science Division in L200 (or by calling 425-564-2321).

*This is an unofficial guide only. It is the student's responsibility to research and communicate with all community college and university programs to which they intend to apply to establish prerequisites and admission requirements, as these vary and are subject to change without notice.*

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