

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION

The medical profession offers a wide variety of exciting, challenging, and rewarding career options. The environment in which medical services are provided has been changing rapidly and will continue to evolve due to changes in national healthcare policy. Still, the physician's role as diagnostician, healer, and patient advocate remains centrally important to the provision of health care in the United States. Although most doctors provide direct patient care, some concentrate on basic applied research, medical education or administration, or some combination of several areas of focus. There are two common types of medical degrees: Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) and Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.). Both types of doctors can work in one or more specialties and in various medical environments. They diagnose illnesses, prescribe medication, and perform surgery.

Doctor of Medicine (M.D.)

When most people think of a physician, they are thinking of a doctor with a Doctor of Medicine degree, who practices allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine treats disease symptoms using drugs or surgery. Many general practitioners hold an M.D. degree, but M.D.'s typically specialize in specific types of medicine such as dermatology, cardiology, orthopedics, pediatrics, etc. There are far more M.D.'s than D.O.'s in the US.

Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.)

Doctors with a degree in osteopathic medicine perform much of the same work as those with an M.D., but they also have training in hands-on therapy manipulating musculoskeletal tissue to relieve pain. Additionally, D.O.'s are trained to have a more holistic approach to medicine, considering a patient's environment, nutrition, and body system as a whole when diagnosing and treating medical conditions.

UNDERGRADUATE PREPARATION

Medical schools require the completion of a bachelor's degree prior to admission to their program. Typically, any major is acceptable. The most common undergraduate majors among pre-medical students include biology, chemistry, biochemistry, physics, and psychology. In selecting a college major, consider how you will complete the pre-requisite courses for your desired medical school, in addition to Nebraska Wesleyan's graduation requirements.

REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED COURSES

Although there is no required undergraduate major for entering the medical field, each institution will have a required list of pre-requisite coursework that must be completed. Some programs accept AP/CLEP/other transfer credits, while other programs do not. To the right is a general list of courses and credits needed for medical school based on the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) requirements. Students should contact their desired graduate school directly for specific pre-requisite requirements, transfer equivalencies, or other questions.

Courses	Credits
Biological Sciences	8-10
Chemistry	16-20
Physics	8-10
Humanities and/or Social Sciences	12-16
English	3
Mathematics	3
Biochemistry	3
Genetics	3

BEYOND ACADEMICS

Pre-medical students are encouraged to participate in experiences, such as leadership activities, volunteer opportunities, research, and shadowing of professionals, which will help prepare them for both medical school and the medical profession. Activities beyond the classroom play a significant role in a student's application. Such experiences demonstrate a commitment to and knowledge of the profession. In particular, shadowing doctors will help students learn more about the daily activities of the medical profession.

Nebraska Wesleyan students interested in healthcare should join Pre-Health Club. Other organizations that may be interesting or useful to students include Psychology Club, Physics Club, and Global Service Learning. As well, consider Tri-Beta (Biology Honorary) and Psi Chi (Psychology Honorary).

MEDICAL EDUCATION

There are over 150 accredited allopathic medical schools in the United States that offer the Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degree, and 40 osteopathic medical schools that offer the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.) degree. M.D. and D.O. programs generally consist of four years of academic coursework at a medical school leading to the medical doctorate degree. Practical experience is important, so all medical programs have dedicated time spent on clinical education and other training opportunities, rather than focusing solely on classroom and lab study. Medical school graduates then begin a residency program, which can take 3-8 additional years to complete. The total number of credit hours required for degree completion varies by school. Some institutions offer joint degrees, post-doctoral residencies, and fellowships. Schools in Nebraska offering medical programs include UNMC and Creighton University.

APPLICATION & ADMISSION

1. There are three centralized application services: the [American Medical College Application Service \(AMCAS\)](#); the [American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service \(AACOMAS\)](#); and the [Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service \(TMDSAS\)](#). Application for admission to UNMC, Creighton, and most other medical schools is made through AMCAS. Applicants select the schools they would like to apply to and send the application directly through the site.
2. The Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) is required for admission to medical school. Information about the exam, registration, and the [Official Guide to the MCAT](#) can be found online on the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) website. As well, consider taking a free practice test of the MCAT through the [NWU Library Mometrix database](#).
3. Each school will also require additional materials to complete your application, such as secondary applications, personal statements, and letters of recommendation/evaluation. The number of required letters varies by school. You should get to know your undergraduate professors so that they can write a thorough letter about your skills and potential to be a successful medical student. Additionally, many schools include one or more interviews in the admissions process.

Regional Schools	Credit Requirement	Avg. MCAT Score	Avg. GPA	Length of Program	Degree Offered
UNMC	90 hours	515	3.75	4 years	M.D.
Creighton University	Bachelor's Degree	513	3.87	4 years	M.D.
University of Iowa	Bachelor's Degree	515	3.81	4 years	M.D.
Des Moines University	Bachelor's Degree	507	3.71	4 years	D.O.
Kansas City University (Kansas City, MO)	Bachelor's Degree	505	3.62	4 years	D.O.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Explore Health Careers](#)

[American Medical Association \(AMA\)](#)

[Association of American Medical Colleges \(AAMC\)](#)

[The Student Doctor Network \(SDN\)](#)

[Pre-Med Life](#)

Current students can use the [Career Assistance Network](#) to connect with NWU alumni in the medical profession.



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