



Career Guide
Office of Health Professions Advising

Allopathic Physician (M.D.)

What is an Allopathic Physician?

Many people are familiar with allopathic physicians—they are medical doctors (or M.D.s). Allopathy is the type of medicine most familiar to people in this country. Allopathic medicine is a biologically based approach to healing and is supported by the American Medical Association. Physicians diagnose, treat, and work to prevent human illness and injury. They perform examinations, analyze medical histories, order and interpret diagnostic tests.

How do I become an M.D.?

Medical school programs that offer an M.D. are very competitive. Generally to gain entrance you must have good grades overall and in prerequisite courses; high scores on the aptitude test for medical school (MCAT), letters of recommendation and an interview are also required. Competitive applicants are well-rounded students with leadership skills and volunteer, research, and shadowing experience. An online application is required using an application system known as AMCAS (see below). After completing a bachelor's degree, students who have been accepted into a medical school program then complete 4 years of medical school. This is followed by 3 to 8 years of residency, depending on the specialization. MDs are licensed by the state after passing an examination. They must also pass the American Board of Medical Specialists (ABMS) exams for board certification in a specialty area.

What is the job outlook?

The government has projected shortages of doctors in the next 30 years so medical schools are trying to include growing numbers of students. While income varies by specialty, location, and hours worked, the median income for all MDs is about \$160,000. For the first few years of practice, accumulated student loans from medical school and undergraduate school may offset the higher income of physicians.

What prerequisite courses do I need?

Prerequisite courses vary only slightly between programs. Medical schools typically require 1 year of biology with lab, 1 year of general chemistry with lab, 1 year of organic chemistry with lab, 1 year of physics with lab, 1 year of English (including at least 1 semester of composition), and several social science/humanities courses. Some programs

may also require or recommend calculus, biochemistry, and behavioral science (psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology). All required courses must have a minimum grade of a C. Additional information on each college's requirements can be found in the *Medical School Admissions Requirements (MSAR)* book published by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) which is available through the AAMC or through online bookstores.

Prerequisite Course Equivalencies at Purdue University

1 year of Biology with labs	BIOL 110-111 OR BIOL 131, 231, 232 and 242
1 year of General Chemistry with labs	CHM 115-116 OR CHM 125-126 OR CHM 123-124
1 year of Organic Chemistry with labs	CHM 255/255L-256/256L OR CHM 261/263-262/264
1 year of Physics with labs	PHYS 220-221 OR PHYS 172 & 272
1 year of English	ENGL 106 OR ENGL 108 Plus upper level writing or literature course

What else do I need to do before I apply?

Generally medical schools will expect to see that you have spent time observing a physician (shadowing). You also should have a record of service to others. Research, while not required, is viewed favorably. Health care experience, both hands on and observational, is important. You should plan to shadow a physician at some point. Medical schools also require an aptitude test, the MCAT, for application. Applying to medical school is expensive so you should plan ahead for the \$1000-2000 of application costs.

How do I apply?

The primary application is made through an online service called AMCAS which is sponsored by the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC). If you are applying to schools in Texas, you will also need to complete the TMDSAS. We recommend that you collect your recommendation letters using the Health Professions Advising Office professional file service. We can then submit your letters electronically to the medical schools. After the primary application has been received, the medical schools take over and you may then be asked to submit a secondary application directly to them. An interview will hopefully be requested at that point.

Where can I get more information?

American Association of Medical Colleges

<http://www.aamc.org>

(includes info on AMCAS and MCAT)

TMDSAS

<http://www.utsystem.edu/tmdsas>

(for applications to schools in Texas)

American Medical Student Association

<http://www.amsa.org>

Student National Medical Association

<http://www.snma.org>

Programs in the state:

Indiana University

<http://www.medicine.iu.edu/>

For more information about medical school programs or your interests in the health professions, contact the Health Professions Advisor, Amy Terstriep, Ph.D., at 765-494-4747 or prehealth@purdue.edu.

Information for this career guide came from www.explorehealthcareers.org, the above websites, and those of individual schools.

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