

Osteopathic Doctor (DO)

What is an osteopathic physician? A doctor of osteopathic medicine (**DO**) is a licensed physician; the DO can practice medicine, perform surgery, and prescribe medications. Most osteopaths practice in primary care areas, such as family medicine, general internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, and pediatrics. Emphasis is on wellness with a “whole-person” approach, not just dealing with symptoms and acute care. Many DOs work in rural and other underserved areas.

More details? For more detailed information, including salaries and job prospects, visit the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: www.bls.gov/Healthcare

Can UWW help me prepare for an accredited osteopathy school? Yes. Students applying to allopathic (MD) and osteopathic (DO) schools must have completed bachelor’s degrees, with many scientific courses, all of which we offer.

What do I need to apply for admission to an accredited osteopathy school?

- 1. Undergraduate degree (BS or BA):** Most applicants will have an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university before entering into DO training.
- 2. Major and minor:** With the large number of science courses required, most applicants will have majored in a natural science such as biology, biochemistry, or chemistry.
- 3. Coursework:** DO schools mandate that students complete several courses in biology and chemistry before entering training, as preparation for the more advanced work.

Requirement	Length/Credits (minimum)	UWW courses which meet the requirements
General biology	1 year / 8-10 credits	BIO 141 and BIO 142
General chemistry	1 year / 8-10 credits	CHEM 102 and CHEM 104
Organic chemistry	Varies by school	CHEM 251, CHEM 252; CHEM 261
Biochemistry	1 course req or rec*	BIO/CHEM 456 (454?)
Physics	1 year / 8-10 credits	PHYSICS 140 and PHYSICS 141

* req/rec = required or recommended

- 4. Other coursework:** Other recommended courses include cell biology (BIO 253), genetics (BIO 251), microbiology (BIO 311), anatomy and physiology (BIO 361 and BIO 362), and general psychology (PSYCH 211). Statistics (BIO 303 or PSYCH 215) is also often listed.
- 5. Overall academic record:** An applicant will need to have a good overall GPA and a good science GPA. This is a very popular field; with many applicants, schools can be very selective. Check on the school’s website for a description of the current class (the group of students who most recently entered) for information on what it takes to be competitive.
- 6. Entrance exam:** Most DO schools ask students to take the Medical College Aptitude Test (MCAT).
- 7. Extracurricular activities:** Applicants are expected to have participated in extracurricular activities. This is one indicator that you are able to work with other people, and even that you have taken on responsibility and leadership. The selection committees for DO schools value a history of extensive volunteer work and an orientation toward service.
- 8. ‘Experience of the field’:** Students are expected to have direct experience with patient care. This can be met through a combination of clinical practice (volunteer work, internships) and

shadowing experience with a licensed DO. Many applicants to DO schools have had personal experience as patients of DOs or as family members of patients, so they have some knowledge of the approach used. Schools may mandate that one of the letters supporting the application be from a licensed DO.

- 9. Other jobs and experiences:** All health schools are looking for applicants who have a depth of experience. This can be demonstrated by many things: competency in a foreign language, working to pay for school, participating in organized athletics, caring for a sick family member, etc.

What happens then? After your professional education, you would receive a doctoral (DO) degree, followed by residency and licensure exams. The school you attend will help you prepare.

Professional organization: Most osteopathic physicians belong to the American Osteopathic Association (<http://www.osteopathic.org/Pages/default.aspx>).

Training in this area: The American Osteopathic Association's Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) is responsible for accrediting these school. There are 30 colleges of osteopathic medicine at 42 locations (some schools have branches). There are two schools in the upper Midwest.

Illinois:

Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine, Midwestern University [CCOM/MWU]
(Downers Grove, IL)
DO program www.midwestern.edu

Iowa:

Des Moines University, College of Osteopathic Medicine [DMU-COM] (Des Moines, IA)
DO program www.dmu.edu/do