Medicine

Degrees Offered

• Doctor of Medicine
• Joint Doctor of Medicine and Doctor of Philosophy
• Joint Doctor of Medicine and Master’s in Public Health

The degree of doctor of medicine (M.D.) is granted to students who have completed the prescribed curriculum and who have been recommended for the degree by the faculty of the School of Medicine.

The M.D./PhD. program is available to students who show exceptional interest and scholarly promise. All admission requirements of the School of Medicine and the specific graduate program apply. An M.D./M.P.H. program is available for those interested in public health issues.

The following information applies only to students in the School of Medicine who are enrolled in the prescribed curriculum which culminates in the M.D. degree. All other students, undergraduates, or graduates enrolled in other programs in the School of Medicine are governed by the policies found elsewhere in this catalog.

Accreditation

The West Virginia University School of Medicine is accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME).

Admission Requirements

The student preparing for any career in the health professions must have a keen interest in the sciences.

The following courses are required for consideration of an application to medical school:

• English: six semester hours
• Biological sciences (with lab): eight semester hours
• Inorganic chemistry (with lab): eight semester hours
• Organic chemistry (with lab): eight semester hours
• Physics (with lab): eight semester hours
• Social or behavioral sciences: six semester hours

Biochemistry and Cellular and Molecular Biology are strongly recommended. A total of ninety semester hours, exclusive of ROTC and general physical education, is required. Computer skills are required. All required courses must be passed with a grade of C or better. All required classes must be completed prior to January 1 of the year of admission.

An excess of credit hours or higher degrees does little to offset the disadvantage of low grades when being considered for admission to the School of Medicine. Repeating courses to raise the grade is discouraged. Applicants who have been subject to suspension from WVU or other medical schools can be admitted only in very exceptional cases and at the discretion of the Admissions Committee.

Pre-Admission Tests

The score of the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) is one of the factors used by the Admissions Committee in considering an applicant for admission. It is recommended that students take the MCAT during the spring of their junior year in college. The MCAT must be taken by September of the year of application. MCATS taken in January of the year of admission will not be considered. The dates for beginning and closure of application acceptances are available through AMCAS and on our website.

Information concerning the time and place of the test can be obtained from your premedical advisor or the Office of Admissions at the Health Sciences Center.

Application Procedure

The admission process is initiated by completing the online American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS) forms. They are online at http://www.aamc.org.

Application for admission in August should be made at the end of the previous school year. The last date for filing an application is November 1. The applicant should file as early as possible, making certain that recent MCAT scores, current transcripts, and letters of recommendation are available to the Admissions Committee.

Admission preference is given to West Virginia residents and those non-resident applicants who have strong ties to the state or verifiable interests in rural and primary care. No one specific factor is used to determine admission. However, careful consideration is given to those personal qualifications
which apply to the study and practice of medicine. The criteria for admission include academic performance, course load, letters of recommendation, MCAT scores, motivation, interpersonal skills, community service, health care experiences, and a personal interview. An early decision program is available for those residents and non-residents with strong grades and MCATs who wish only to apply and attend WVU.

No applicant is admitted before an interview by the Admissions Committee. Residency status is determined by the Board of Governors Policy Bulletin #36. Interviews and consideration of applicants begin in September. Acceptances are made on a rolling basis.

If an applicant is denied admission or does not enroll after acceptance, he or she must reapply in the regular manner for consideration in a subsequent year.

Advanced Standing

Advanced standing positions are considered only in very exceptional circumstances and only to students currently attending a medical school accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). A request for transfer is usually considered during the second year. The application must be received no later than April 1. The applicant must present certification of good academic and professional standing in the school from which he/she is transferring. An official transcript of all prior medical school work and recommendations are required from all medical schools attended. In addition, successful results of Step I of the United States Medical Licensure Examination must be available before action on an application can be finalized.

Conditions Following Acceptance

An applicant accepted into the first year or in advanced standing is expected to meet all entrance requirements and satisfactorily complete all undergraduate/medical school work in progress. Failure to do so may result in the withdrawal of the acceptance by the Admissions Committee.

The student must be aware that furnishing, or causing to be furnished, false or incorrect information for the purpose of the School of Medicine application constitutes grounds for disciplinary actions, including, but not limited to, expulsion or revocation of the acceptance.

A criminal background check is required and must be successfully passed prior to matriculation. Certain convictions negate an offer to attend medical school at WVU.

Students in the School of Medicine agree to abide by the provision of an integrity code, which requires ethical and moral standards of conduct in all situations. Each student is required to return a signed statement to the Office of Student Services, indicating the student has read and understands the Student Professional and Academic Integrity Code of the West Virginia University School of Medicine. The code and copies of the statement are available on the Student Services website.

Prior to entering medical school, all students must complete certain prescribed immunization and diagnostic procedures. Personal health insurance is required.

Promotion and Graduation Requirements

Evaluation of Student Progress

Promotion of a student in the M.D. degree program is evaluated in four major areas: (1) successful completion of all required work, (2) successful completion of Step 1 and Step 2 of the United States Medical Licensure Examination (USMLE), (3) successful completion of the WVU School of Medicine Clinical Performance Exam, and (4) successful fulfillment of the professional standards of the School of Medicine, including 100 hours of community service.

The following information is only a brief outline of the School of Medicine policies and procedures. Detailed requirements and policies for evaluation of student progress and graduation may be found in the Policy on Academic and Professional Standards Governing the M.D. degree program at WVU School of Medicine on the Student Services website. The Committee on Academic and Professional Standards administers all promotion and dismissal rules.

Academic Coursework Review

The Committee on Academic and Professional Standards of the School of Medicine reviews the performance of each student in every course at the end of each academic period and makes recommendations to the dean. If a student has been found to have an unsatisfactory performance in any of the required courses, dismissal from the school may be recommended. In selected circumstances, the committee may recommend remedial work of all or a portion of the curriculum. Exceptions may be made only upon recommendation of the committee. The application of rules on dismissal is not automatically changed by removal of incomplete (I) grades or by the repetition of courses in other medical courses.

It is the policy of the School of Medicine that the departments conduct examinations to help in the overall evaluation of student progress. In addition to the departmental examinations, other examinations may be conducted for other purposes. At the end of each year, a comprehensive examination, designed on an interdepartmental basis, may be required as a test of readiness for promotion.

A student may be subject to remedial work or dismissal on recommendation of the Committee on Academic and Professional Standards to the dean even though no unsatisfactory (U) grade has been received in a required course. Such an unusual event would occur only if, in the opinion of the committee, the student’s overall performance does not meet the academic/professional standards of the School of Medicine.
Readmission of a dismissed student is the prerogative of the Admissions Committee after careful review of the student’s performance, including but not limited to, recommendations of the Committee on Academic and Professional Standards.

**Grading Policy**

All courses required for the M.D. degree are graded as honors (H), satisfactory (S), or unsatisfactory (U) at the completion of the course in lieu of other letter grades. The H, S, and U designations are accompanied by a narrative report of the student’s progress, noting any factors requiring remedial work or counseling. The narrative is submitted by each course and filed in the Office of Student Services. A grade of U shall be regarded as a failing grade.

The grade of incomplete (I) is given when the instructor believes that the work is unavoidably incomplete or that a supplementary examination is justifiable. If a grade of I is not removed by satisfactory completion of the work before the end of the next semester in which the student is in residence, it becomes a failure (unsatisfactory) unless special permission to postpone the work is obtained from the Committee on Academic and Professional Standards (University rule). All students who have a health problem which they feel may be causing difficulty with their academic progress are strongly advised to notify an associate dean for student services. It is the responsibility of the student to consult the instructor about the means and schedule for making up incomplete courses.

No student will be permitted to register for any work of the second or subsequent year until all courses for the year before have been completed successfully.

**United States Medical Licensure Examination (USMLE)**

All states require that physicians be licensed to practice medicine. Satisfactory completion of all portions of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) is the only mechanism by which this license may be obtained. The School of Medicine requires a passing grade on Step I and Step II for promotion and graduation. A failing grade will delay progress and require remediation. Students are limited to three attempts on each step.

Step I is required upon successful completion of all basic science coursework. A passing grade in Step I is required for promotion into the clinical rotations. Step II (clinical knowledge and clinical skills) is required after successful completion of third-year clinical rotations. A passing score on Step II is required before a recommendation can be made to grant the M.D. degree by the School of Medicine faculty and Committee on Academic and Professional Standards.

*Licensure examinations are administered using a computer-based testing format.*

**Professional Standards Review**

All non-disciplinary matters are governed by the concept of academic due process.

In view of public and professional responsibilities, the faculty of each of the professional schools of WVU has the authority to recommend to the president of the University the removal of any student from its rolls whenever, by formal decision reduced to writing, the faculty finds that the student is unfit to meet the qualifications and responsibilities of the profession. For further information the reader is referred to the Policy on Academic and Professional Standards Governing the M.D. Degree Program at West Virginia University School of Medicine, which is available at the School of Medicine Office of Student Services and on the Student Services website.

**Departure from Scheduled Work**

Medical students are registered for all prescribed courses for each semester except by special permission from the Committee on Academic Standards and an associate dean for student services of the School of Medicine. This permission is not valid until it has been reported to the assistant director of admissions and records, Health Sciences Center, and for record, the Office of Student Services, School of Medicine.

Interruption of academic work must be approved by the Office of Student Services.

**Medical Education Program of Study**

On the most recent restructuring of medical education curriculum, the most significant changes include the following:

1. Students begin clinical experiences early in their first year of medical school.
2. The basic science disciplines have been integrated.
3. Incoming medical students are required to lease a laptop computer to use in the curriculum that incorporates information and academic technology in the delivery of instruction.

With these principles in mind, the old semester (college-like) schedule of the independent discipline-based courses, for example, physiology, gross anatomy, biochemistry, neurobiology, microanatomy, epidemiology, and psychiatry has been replaced.

**First Year**

Medical students’ first year is a thirty-eight-week academic year divided into three blocks (sixteen weeks, fifteen weeks, and seven weeks). There are approximately twenty-four scheduled instructional contact hours per week. Each block contains three courses: a basic science multidisciplinary course,
public health (epidemiology, biostatistics, and preventive medicine) in the fall, and physical diagnosis and clinical integration (large group alternating every other week with small groups). While physical diagnosis and clinical integration runs throughout the year, the basic science component changes each block. The first block (sixteen weeks) contains a multidisciplinary run course: human function (physiology, biochemistry, and genetics.). Second block (fifteen weeks) consists of human structure (gross anatomy, embryology, and microanatomy: large group and laboratory). Third block (seven weeks) consists of multidisciplinary neuroscience (ten hours large group, laboratory, and small group). A weekly problem-based learning group is maintained throughout the first year.

Second Year
Medical students’ second academic year is thirty-four weeks. The schedules of course material from Microbiology and Immunology, Pathology, Pharmacology, and Physical Diagnosis and Clinical Integration-two courses are integrated by organ system. Each course maintains its autonomy with respect to assessment of student performance. This integrated, yet independent, approach assists students in finding remediation courses if they experience academic difficulty in any one particular discipline. In addition to the integration of the schedule of these four courses, there is an additional course, Behavioral Science and Psychopathology, in the fall and Health Care Ethics in the spring. There are approximately twenty-six scheduled instructional contact hours per week.

Clinical Years
The last two years of study take place in the clinics, hospitals, and community settings where students have the opportunity to help diagnose and treat patients under supervision of the faculty and staff. All students will serve a significant portion of the clinical years training at an off-campus or rural site.

Third Year
In the third year, the student must spend a designated period of time in each of the major clinical disciplines: internal medicine, surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, psychiatry and neurology, and family medicine. This gives the student a foundation in history-taking, examination, patient relations, laboratory aids, diagnosis, treatment, and use of the medical literature in the major clinical disciplines. One month is spent in rural primary care.

Approximately one-third of each class is selected during their first year to spend the third and fourth year at the Charleston Division of the Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center of West Virginia University. A smaller number of students will also complete their clinical work on the Eastern Division Campus.

Fourth Year
The fourth year is a partially structured and partially elective year. Each student works with an advisor to select the program best suited to the individual’s abilities and goals. Courses selected are subject to approval of an associate dean in the Office of Student Services.

Three months of the senior year are committed to required clerkships at the home campus which include one month in internal medicine, family general medicine, surgery, or pediatric sub-internship; one month of acute care, and one month of rural community care. The remaining five months of the senior year are elective at approved teaching sites.

A catalog is available online that lists the approved electives and selection guidelines at [http://education.hsc.wvu.edu/ms4catalog](http://education.hsc.wvu.edu/ms4catalog). Students interested in other extramural opportunities are advised to consult with the fourth-year curriculum coordinator in the Office of Student Services. Elective time must be spent in LCME (Liaison Committee on Medical Education) or JCAH (Joint Council of American Hospitals) accredited institutions. Foreign rotations, regardless of sponsorship, are limited to one month credit.