

## An Introduction to Osteopathic Medical Education

Osteopathic medical school curricula closely mirror those of allopathic (MD) medical schools. The first two years focus on the biomedical and clinical sciences, followed by core clinical training in the clinical specialties. Osteopathic medical school accreditation standards require training in internal medicine, obstetrics/gynecology, pediatrics, family practice, surgery, psychiatry, emergency medicine, radiology, preventive medicine and public health. In addition, most schools provide a rural or underserved-focused primary care experience, and provide time for electives as well. For information on each school's curriculum, see the college pages beginning on page 28.

Osteopathic medical schools maintain those core values which the profession's early founders stressed as central distinguishing aspects of osteopathic philosophy: holistic, patient-centered, preventive, and health- vs. disease-focused care within a primary care context, although these elements of osteopathic philosophy have become increasingly prominent in allopathic medical education and practice as well.

The osteopathic medical school curriculum is clearly distinguished from allopathic medical education by its focus on osteopathic manipulative medicine (OMM), a hands-on therapy that is used to diagnose and treat illness and injury. OMM education usually occurs through year-long first- and second-year theoretical and skills courses, and through subsequent clinical experiences. OMM education is in addition to, and integrated with, medical training on current and emerging theory and methods of medical diagnosis and treatment.

For more information on osteopathic medicine, see the overview beginning on page 5.

## Accreditation

Osteopathic medical schools are accredited by The American Osteopathic Association Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA), recognized to accredit osteopathic medical education by the U.S. Department of Education. See [www.osteopathic.org/inside-aoa/accreditation/pages/default.aspx](http://www.osteopathic.org/inside-aoa/accreditation/pages/default.aspx).

Many osteopathic medical schools also are accredited by a regional educational accreditation organization.

New colleges of osteopathic medicine hold provisional accreditation status during their first four years of student enrollment. A college holding provisional accreditation status may admit students and offer medical instruction. During the year preceding the graduation of its first class, a provisionally accredited college will conduct various activities that will allow it to attain fully accredited status. Should the college not gain

full accreditation, COCA has policies and procedures in place to protect the educational and financial investments of students.

## The Four-Year Curriculum

The first two years of osteopathic medical school emphasize the basic science foundation to medicine. In addition, students learn a core set of clinical examination skills and gain an understanding of the various systems of the body. Lectures, laboratories, and other learning experiences are designed to prepare students for the last two years of medical school, which are the clinical clerkship years. Early clinical exposure is an important part of many schools' curricula. Specific learning methods and curricular offerings vary from college to college.

Below is a *general guide* to the material covered in the osteopathic medical school curriculum. Please check the college to which you are applying for specifics.

Year 1	Year 2	Core Clinical Clerkships (Years 3 and 4)	Other Clinical Clerkships (Years 3 and 4)
Anatomy	Gerontology	Emergency Medicine	Anesthesiology
Physiology	Cardiology	Family Medicine	Cardiology
Clinical Skills	Gastrointestinal System	Internal Medicine	Gastroenterology
Radiology	Hematopoietic System	Obstetrics and Gynecology	Laboratory Medicine
Osteopathic Principles and Practices	Osteopathic Principles and Practices	Osteopathic Principles and Practices	Nephrology
Microbiology and Immunology	Pharmacology	Pediatrics	Neurology
Neuroscience	Endocrinology	Psychiatry and Behavioral Science	Oncology and Hematology
Histology	Psychiatry	Surgery	Orthopedics
Biochemistry	Respiratory		Otorhinolaryngology
Pathology	Ethics and Jurisprudence		Pulmonary Medicine
Doctor/Patient Communication	Family Medicine		Radiology
	Genitourinary System		
	Reproductive System		
	Pediatrics/Growth and Development		