

# **Podiatry Information**

## **Career Description**

Podiatric medicine is devoted to the study of human movement, with the medical care of the foot, ankle, and lower leg as its primary focus. A podiatrist is to the foot what a dentist is to the mouth or an ophthalmologist to the eye—a specialist who has undergone lengthy, thorough study to become uniquely well-qualified to treat a specific part of the body.

A Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM) specializes in preventing, diagnosing, and treating foot disorders, diseases, and injuries. A DPM makes independent judgments and performs or orders all necessary diagnostic tests. They perform surgery, administer medications (including DEA-restricted medications), and prescribe physical therapy regimens.

DPMs often detect serious health problems that may otherwise go unnoticed, because a number of diseases are first manifest through symptoms of the lower extremities (e.g. diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, or kidney disease). Podiatric physicians are educated in state-of-the-art techniques involving surgery, orthopedics, dermatology, physical medicine, and rehabilitation.

Podiatrists make an average of \$175,000/year. In general, the hours are flexible and it is therefore comfortable for individuals who want a balanced lifestyle. The work hours of a podiatrist varies from 30 to 60 hours a week. Podiatrists in private practice can set their own hours.

## **Admission Requirements**

Potential podiatric medical students may be evaluated on the basis of their GPA, performance on the MCAT, DAT, or GRE, extracurricular activities, work or volunteering in health care settings, shadowing podiatrists, personal interview, professional potential, etc. Admission criteria may vary slightly by institution—contact schools for specific requirements.

Traditionally the MCAT has been the only standardized test required for admissions to the colleges of podiatric medicine. However, some colleges will accept the GRE or DAT in lieu of the MCAT. Check schools for testing requirements. A number of factors are considered in admitting students to a college of podiatric medicine. Undergraduates with liberal arts backgrounds, as well as those with science majors, are encouraged to apply.

## **Prerequisite Classes (*common prerequisites, although not necessarily for every school*)**

To enter a college of podiatric medicine, one must first complete at least three years or 90 semester hours of college credit at an accredited institution. Over 95 percent of the students who enter a college of podiatric medicine have a bachelor's degree.

Minimum semester credit hour requirements include the following prerequisites: (all science courses require a lab)

- Biology: 8–12\*
- Chemistry (General or Inorganic): 8
- Organic Chemistry: 8
- Physics: 8
- English: 6–8\*\*

\*Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine requires 12 semester hours of biological science. \*\*California School of Podiatric Medicine requires 8 semester hours of English/Communication studies.

The science courses you take should be those designed for health professional students (premedical students), and MUST include laboratory experience. Courses for non-science majors are not accepted.

- English
  - Wrtg 150 Freshman Writing
  - Adv Writing Take the class your major requires (Engl 315, 316, etc)
  - Other English electives
- Social Sciences/Humanities
  - Any course from the GE electives in Arts, Letters, and Sciences (Civilization 1 and 2, arts, letters)
- Biology
  - PDBio 120 Science of Biology
  - PDBio 220 Human Anatomy with Lab
  - PDBio 305 Human Physiology with Lab
  - or any science class relevant to medicine
- Microbiology (some schools)
  - MMBio 221/222 General Microbiology with Lab
- Physics
  - Phscs 105/107 Introduction to Physics and Lab
  - Phscs 106/108 Introduction to Physics and Lab
  - or Phscs 121/123 (calculus-based)
- General or Inorganic Chemistry (may require labs)
  - Chem 105 General College Chemistry
  - Chem 106/107 General College Chemistry and Lab
- Biochemistry (often recommended)
  - Chem 351 Organic Chemistry
  - Chem 352/353 Organic Chemistry and Lab
  - Chem 481 Biochemistry

## Application Process

All nine schools of podiatric medicine use the AACPMAS online application service. Dates are as follows:

- **September 1** AACPMAS begins processing admission applications
- **April 1**—deadline for priority consideration
- **July 31**—final application deadline

Most schools have rolling admissions, so the earlier you submit, the better your chances are.

Other admission requirements include letters of recommendation, transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate institutions attended, as well as personal interviews.

## Class Profiles

Approximately 700–900 applicants apply to podiatric medical school each year; first-year enrollment totals range from 400–600 per year. Total enrollment at AACPM's institutions of podiatric medicine totaled 2144 in 2008–09. The number of females applying to the colleges of podiatric medicine has been consistently rising over the past several years. In 2008–09, 40 percent of matriculants were female.

In 2008, the overall GPA was 3.3 and the average science GPA was 3.1. Average MCAT scores for matriculants also stayed about the same in all categories over the previous year: Verbal Reasoning was 7.1; Physical Science was 7.1; and Biological Sciences 7.5.

## Other Resources

- [www.apma.org](http://www.apma.org) – American Podiatric Medicine Association
- [www.e-aacpmas.org/](http://www.e-aacpmas.org/) – American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine Application Service
- [www.aacpm.org](http://www.aacpm.org) – American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine