

COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

Other Content

Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Introduction to Osteopathic Medicine

As a philosophy, science and art, osteopathic medicine is a total approach to health and disease. It recognizes that the neuromusculoskeletal system is of major importance to human life. The interrelationship between this and other body-systems is a basic part of osteopathic philosophy. An emphasis on primary care, health maintenance, prevention of disease and attention to the neuromusculoskeletal system is key to osteopathic medical education and practice. Universally accepted today, these attributes were considered unorthodox when Dr. Andrew Taylor Still (1828-1917) objected to the crude medications of his time and sought to enhance the body's inherent healing through manipulation.

The osteopathic physician incorporates evaluation and treatment of the musculoskeletal system as a basis for an approach to health and disease, combining it with the diagnostic and therapeutic modalities used by general scientific approaches to the healing arts. Like their MD counterparts, DOs must be licensed in the states where they practice, and additional board certification in specialties further underscores their professional credentials. All 50 states and the District of Columbia provide for the unlimited practice of medicine and surgery by osteopathic physicians. Licensing boards are usually composed of senior members of the osteopathic profession. In some states, MDs and DOs participate in combined licensing boards.

THE OSTEOPATHIC PHILOSOPHY

This philosophy provides the osteopathic physician with a unique way of looking at health and disease. These premises include the following:

- The human body is a unit in which structure and function are reciprocally interdependent.
- The body, through a complex system, tends to be self-regulating and self-healing.
- The adequate function of body systems depends on the unimpeded flow of blood and nerve impulses.
- The musculoskeletal system is a major body system, and its importance exceeds that of mere framework and support.
- There are musculoskeletal components to disease that are not only manifestations of the disease, but also important contributing and maintaining factors.

The adoption of these basic premises led to the development of the osteopathic total-body concept. The patient is considered as part of their relationship to their psycho-, social, economic, and physical environment rather than as an isolated unit. Instead of emphasizing the momentary disease state, the osteopathic approach studies and treats the person's well-being, lifestyle and behavior as a whole.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The program leading to the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree is guided by the following goals for the purpose of providing a comprehensive and contemporary curriculum to educate health professionals to care for the whole person, advance the health of diverse communities and participate in the ever-changing environment. The curriculum seeks to:

- Integrate and appropriately sequence basic and clinical science material
- Present major themes in biomedicine
- Integrate early clinical experiences and case studies, and emphasize problem-solving to increase the application of knowledge-based issues to issues of patient care
- Utilize methods in information technology and informatics
- Participate in inter-professional education activities.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Each candidate for the degree of Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine must:

- Maintain established standards of personal and professional conduct
- Successfully fulfill all academic and clinical requirements
- Pass COMLEX Level 1, Level 2 CE and Level 2 PE** (National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners).

All requirements must be completed within six years from the first date of matriculation.

Each graduate must be free of indebtedness to the College. Those students who have received financial aid are required to complete the exit interview on-line process at least one week prior to commencement. The College academic transcript will be given when all financial obligations to PCOM and the exit interview have been met

Note: It is the responsibility of the graduate to fulfill the requirements for practice for the state licensing board in the state in which he or she chooses to practice. These requirements vary widely and are regulated by the laws of each state. It is the responsibility of the graduate to get the information needed pertaining to state licensing and to fulfill these responsibilities.

Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) - All Campuses

Admission to PCOM is comprehensive as well as competitive. Acceptance by the Faculty Committee on Admissions is based on the applicant's fulfillment of undergraduate course requirements, grade point averages (GPA), Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) scores, letters of recommendation, essay, resume and a personal interview with the committee.

PCOM seeks well-rounded, achievement-oriented persons whose character, maturity and sense of dedication point to a successful and productive life as an osteopathic physician. PCOM is an institution that has historically sought diversity in its student population and actively recruits under-represented minority students and non-traditional students, including veterans, who often offer exceptional potential for becoming outstanding osteopathic physicians.

Requirements for Admission

Prior to matriculation at any campus site, each applicant must meet the following PCOM admission requirements:

- Satisfactory completion of a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university. Applications from students with three years of exceptional undergraduate work completed may be considered.
- The satisfactory completion of the following undergraduate courses must be demonstrated by the applicant:
 - Eight semester hours of biology, including two semester hours of laboratory.
 - Eight semester hours of physics, including two semester hours of laboratory.
 - Sixteen semester hours of chemistry, including four semester hours of laboratory; at least four of the sixteen required semester hours must be organic chemistry (with lab) and at least three semester hours must be biochemistry.
 - Six semester hours of English composition and literature.
- Official exam scores from the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) must be submitted. For those who are submitting an updated test score, a January test date will be accepted. The MCAT must be taken within four years of the desired date of matriculation. For 2022 enrollment, exams taken before August 2018 will not be accepted to complete an applicant record.
- U.S. citizenship or permanent resident status (green card).

Application Steps and Schedule

We participate in AACOMAS (<https://www.aacom.org/become-a-doctor/how-to-apply-to-osteopathic-medical-college/>), the centralized application service for the colleges of osteopathic medicine and adhere to the Applicant Protocol and Admissions Guidelines as adopted by the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine and published in the ChooseDO Explorer (<https://choosedo.org/choose-do-explorer-registration/>). For AACOMAS application questions or assistance, please visit the AACOMAS Applicant Help Center (https://help.liasonedu.com/AACOMAS_Applicant_Help_Center/) web site which includes contact information, instructions, and other important details.

Beginning in May, prospective osteopathic medical students may submit their application through a secure Web server, AACOMAS. Be advised that a full AACOMAS application must be e-submitted, completed and verified by February 1, 2022 to be considered for admissions to PCOM/PCOM South Georgia and/or PCOM Georgia.

There are no supplemental application requirements for 2022 admission. Rather, in the AACOMAS application, visit the Program Materials section of your PCOM application and respond to the questions posed on the Questions tab.

When each processed application is received by the PCOM Admissions Office from AACOMAS, applicants will receive an email notification with further instruction.

All DO program candidates must:

- Submit a separate AACOMAS application for PCOM/PCOM South Georgia and/or PCOM Georgia. In AACOMAS, access to the PCOM South Georgia application can be found through the PCOM application. On the Questions tab, candidates are asked to select the PCOM location(s) for which they wish to be considered: PCOM, PCOM

South Georgia or **both** PCOM and PCOM South Georgia. Candidates wishing to apply to PCOM Georgia will need to complete a separate application in AACOMAS.

- Pay the corresponding AACOMAS fee(s).
- Submit an institutional application fee to PCOM for each location required:
 - \$75 for PCOM and/or PCOM South Georgia.
 - \$75 for PCOM Georgia.

This fee is required in order for the Office of Admissions to process each application and the corresponding application materials.

The Letter of Recommendation requirement for DO admission is as follows:

A minimum of 3 letters of recommendation are required from individuals who know the applicant in a professional capacity and can comment on one's character, work ethic, academic history, scientific acumen, empathy, compassion, resilience, emotional intelligence, commitment and knowledge of the healthcare environment. The DO Faculty Committee of Admissions strongly prefers that the letters be from the following sources:

- A pre-health or academic advisor/committee (undergraduate, post-baccalaureate or graduate programs). A pre-health advisor letter will meet the requirement for one of the three required letters of recommendation. A pre-health packet of letters from an institution containing three or more letters of recommendation will meet the requirement.
- Undergraduate, Graduate or Post-Baccalaureate faculty (preferably those who delivered a candidate's completed science coursework), who can attest to academic performance and aptitude. We highly recommend AT LEAST ONE letter from an academic source.
- Physicians, preferably DOs, and/or other health care providers with whom a candidate has had a professional relationship, who can attest to the applicant's clinical experiences and overall fit for the profession.

Candidates who may not have the ability to submit letters from any/all of the above sources should select letter writers who know them in a professional capacity and can comment on the applicant's character, work ethic, academic history, scientific acumen, empathy, compassion, resilience, emotional intelligence, commitment and/or knowledge of the healthcare environment.

A pre-health advisor letter will meet the requirement for one of the three required letters of recommendation. We would prefer each letter to be submitted separately, however, a packet of letters from an institution containing three or more letters of recommendation will meet the requirement.

A letter of recommendation from an osteopathic physician is strongly recommended but not required.

The application and all required materials (including the institutional application fee(s)) must be received by March 1, 2022. However, early submission is strongly recommended as interviewees are selected and decisions are rendered on a rolling basis.

Interviews

Each campus has a PCOM Faculty Committee on Admissions that will review all completed applications, select those applicants to be

interviewed and inform them in writing, via e-mail, of the interview date, time and location. Although all applicants who are accepted must be interviewed, the granting of an interview should not be construed as evidence of final acceptance.

Interviews generally begin in mid-September and continue until the end of March. A candidate can be selected for an interview at any time throughout the review process as deemed competitive by the Faculty Committee on Admissions. Interview sessions are on-campus or virtual events that include an opportunity to meet with student ambassadors and tour the campus. PCOM conducts a panel interview that generally includes the applicant and at least two members of the admissions committee, and lasts about one half hour.

Admissions Decisions

Interviewed candidates are usually notified within five weeks from the date of interview. Accepted applicants are asked to remit a \$250 non-refundable tuition prepayment according to the following schedule as noted by the AACOM Admissions Guidelines:

- Those accepted prior to November 15 will have until December 14.
- Those accepted between November 15 and January 14 will have 30 days.
- Those accepted between January 14 and May 14 will have 14 days.
- Those accepted on or after May 15 may be asked for an immediate deposit.

An additional deposit of \$500 is required by April 15 from all confirmed students. This fee is non-refundable and, along with the initial \$250 deposit, will be credited to the student's tuition account.

The candidate is also asked to review and acknowledge PCOM's Technical Standards for Admission and Matriculation by sending the completed/signed forms at the time of deposit submission.

PCOM does not have an Early Decision Program.

To ensure that students accepted to PCOM will be permitted to perform clerkships during their third and fourth clinical years, and thus ensure them the opportunity to successfully complete their DO degree requirements, PCOM requires all first-year students to complete a criminal background check prior to matriculation. All students must have their criminal background checks processed through a PCOM vendor of choice. The Admissions Office must have this information on file prior to orientation; students will not be permitted to start classes without this information.

Transfer Students and Advanced Standing

PCOM does not routinely accept transfer students for the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine program; however, a transfer application may be considered under extenuating circumstances and depending on seats available in the class. Consideration will be given only to a student who is in good standing at an AOA-accredited college of osteopathic medicine or who is eligible for re-admission to the previously attended college of osteopathic medicine. COMLEX I must have a passing grade prior to matriculation at PCOM if the student is accepted by the faculty committee on Admissions.

The initial request for transfer must originate from the dean of the college or university from which the student wishes to transfer and must be directed to the dean of the PCOM location to which they are applying. Application materials must be submitted before February 1, 2022 and

a formal interview with the Faculty Committee on Admissions will be required.

If accepted, a transfer student will be given credit for courses successfully passed at the previous college that meet PCOM's curriculum requirements. A minimum of two years must be completed at PCOM for a student to be eligible to receive the DO degree. Accepted students must be prepared for summer enrollment.

Transfer requests from one PCOM location to another must be discussed with the Dean at the PCOM location of enrollment.

For all other students entering the DO program, PCOM does not grant advanced standing or credit for prior learning or for courses completed at other institutions.