

HEALTH PROFESSIONS OFFICE

JOINT DEGREE PROGRAMS

Many schools offer programs in which the students can obtain both a Medical Doctor degree and either a master's degree in business or public health; a PhD in a science-related field; or a law degree. To find a list of schools that offer joint degree programs, visit:

MD/PhD: www.aamc.org/research/dbr/mdphd/programs.htm

MD/MPH: <http://services.aamc.org/currdir/section3/degree2.cfm?data=yes&program=mdmph>

MD/MBA: <http://services.aamc.org/currdir/section3/degree2.cfm?data=yes&program=mdmba>

MD/JD: <http://services.aamc.org/currdir/section3/degree2.cfm?data=yes&program=mdjd>

MD/PhD

Physician-scientists use their research and clinical skills both in the laboratory and in the hospital. They engage in basic and clinical research to advance medical knowledge and improve medical care. They also attempt to bridge the gap between laboratory research and clinical medicine. Approximately four-fifths of MD/PhD graduates are employed as faculty members in academic medical centers, where they engage in research and are faculty members of both basic science departments and clinical departments. Other graduates are employed in clinical medicine, government, or biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies.

The typical MD/PhD program runs for 7-8 years. It includes completion of the first two years of medical school, followed by two to four years of doctoral research (including the completion of a thesis project), and then a return to medical school for core clinical training and electives during the final two years of the medical curriculum. At some schools, a more integrated approach to the graduate and medical education has been introduced. You may complete your doctoral research in a variety of disciplines, ranging from pharmacology to neuroscience to medical anthropology, depending on the departments offered by the particular school. Some programs admit only 1-2 students a year, while others accept up to 20. Following the receipt of both degrees, the physician-scientist completes a residency training in a medical specialty, often followed by additional clinical and/or research training in a fellowship program.

Students interested in applying usually apply to MD/PhD programs through the usual MD-only application process, although this varies by school. Some schools first accept students into the MD program and only then consider them for the PhD program; others have a separate MD/PhD committee; still others consider applicants for the PhD program only after completion of the first year of medical school. It is important to contact individual schools about their application process. In addition to the experiences and attributes necessary for successful application to medical school, joint degree applicants will also need relevant research experience. The average MCATs for successful MD/PhD applicants is 34Q, the average GPA is 3.7.

40 MD/PhD programs are actually supported by the NIH (National Institute of Health); these programs are designated Medical Scientist in Training Programs (MSTP), and students receive full support for their education, including a stipend.

MD/MPH

Public health careers offer something for everyone. Epidemiology and biostatistics involve mathematics and modeling. Environmental health includes a wide range of science skills. Health administration incorporates business and management skills. Health education involves skills required to develop community-wide prevention programs. Health policy includes an understanding of law-making processes. Many individuals entering careers as medical doctors or public health practitioners wish to acquire not only medical practice competencies, but also an understanding of the history, organization, goals, and philosophy of public health. The joint MD/MPH program offers a broad-based orientation to public health while a student completes medical school requirements. The Master of Public Health degree provides increased knowledge of and sensitivity to the political, historical, economic, and social environments of health promotion and health services delivery.

Programs generally take 4 or 5 years to complete; depending on the program, MPH classes may be held in the evenings and over summers in order to complete the dual degree in four years, or may be taken along with MD

classes in order to complete the program in five years. The application process also varies between schools: for some, students apply to the joint program only after completing their first year of medical school, while for others students apply directly to the program when completing their medical school secondary applications. Be sure to check with individual schools to see how long their programs are (which timeline fits best with your life), what specialties the program has (do you want your MPH in epidemiology or international health?), and how to apply for the program. Some schools may require that you take the GRE, while others will accept the MCAT. Most programs require that applicants have a GPA of 3.0 or above, but closer to a 3.5 will be considered competitive.

MD/MBA

As the U.S. healthcare system continues to evolve, it is becoming increasingly important for physicians to play a role in healthcare administration. Physicians trained as health industry managers are in a position to improve the quality and cost of medical care at the institutions at which they work. The dual degree MD/MBA program is designed for students interested in integrating the study of medicine with training in managerial, financial, and technical expertise in the health care field. Graduates of these programs will have the tools to compete for positions in a growing niche of physician-managers who will be recruited by all facilities from the smallest clinic to the largest tertiary health care facility, from research laboratory to university or hospital medical departments.

MD/MBA programs take 5 years to complete. Although all schools have a different curriculum, in general most students complete the first 3 years of medical school, followed by 1 year of business school, and then a final year of electives at both the medical school and business school. In order to apply to the joint MD/MBA program, you'll need to contact the individual school. Some schools want medical school students to apply to the MBA program in their third year, some want students to apply separately to both the medical school and the business school, and still others simply have an MD/MBA application. It is also important to contact each school about their testing requirements. All medical schools will require the MCAT for admission, and some business schools will require the GMAT. While business experience may not be necessary for admission to joint programs, it is important to demonstrate that you are motivated to be in business, and have both leadership skills and managerial potential. The average GPA of accepted students ranges from 3.2-3.7, and schools that ask for GMAT scores range from 650-700.

MD/JD

MD/JD students plan to pursue a variety of careers, especially in academic medicine and/or law, and in the public policy, governmental regulation, and health care administration arenas. Many become involved in malpractice law and patent law. MD/JD programs typically take 6-7 years, depending on how many summers are utilized. The sequence of the each program varies greatly by school: a few begin the first year of law school curriculum, and then the last 5 years are tailored to the individual by medical and law school advisors. Other programs complete the first 2 years of medical school, followed by a leave of absence to complete the law degree, and then the last 2 clinical years of medical school. Each school also varies greatly in their admissions processes, although most involve two separate applications, one to the medical school and one to the affiliated law school. Because most application are separate, this means that the applicant must meet each school's admissions requirements, meaning that both the MCAT and the LSAT must be taken (as always, this differs by school – contact individual programs to ascertain if the LSAT is necessary for admissions). As always, a competitive GPA will be above a 3.5; keep in mind that you will need to be competitive according to both the law school's statistics and the medical school's statistics, which means MCAT scores above a 30 and LSAT scores above a 160.

IMPORTANT:

Be advised that most, if not all, joint programs are extremely difficult to get in to. Also, be prepared for very rigorous class schedules, since you will be completing two degrees, often simultaneously.