Podiatry (DPM)

**Career Description**

- Podiatric physicians (or podiatrists) prevent, diagnose, and treat foot and ankle disorders, diseases, and injuries.
- Podiatrists are often the first to diagnose a number of systemic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease and are integral to the treatment of those diseases.
- Podiatrists use physical exams, x-rays, and laboratory tests to diagnose conditions; prescribe medications; order physical therapy; set fractures; and perform surgery.
- By helping patients with gait, balance and pain issues, DPMs are often able to make walking much more efficient and comfortable for their patients.
- Podiatric physicians work in many settings including private and group practices, hospitals, extended care facilities, public health, Veterans Affairs hospitals, and the U.S. Armed Forces.
- Although most practice general care, some podiatrists specialize in sports medicine, pediatrics, dermatology, radiology, geriatrics, surgery, and diabetic foot care.
- When you consider that 26 bones make up the foot and think about how much time we are on our feet, it is no surprise that a medical specialty has developed to treat foot and lower leg problems.

**Becoming a Podiatrist**

- Requirements are the same as those for medical school and preparation for the MCAT is necessary.
- After completing the bachelor’s degree, students attend a podiatric medical program for 4 years followed by a comprehensive 3 year podiatric medicine and surgery residency.
- A board exam is required for licensure.

**Preparation**

- Shadowing experience with podiatric physicians is strongly encouraged to ensure this is the right field for you and that you have an accurate understanding of the field.
- Podiatry schools are competitive largely because there are so few of them.
- Research experience is a plus.
- Leadership skills, extra-curricular and community activities, and demonstration of empathy are also needed.
- Prerequisite courses are fairly standard between programs. See chart below for information on requirements.
- All required courses must have a minimum grade of C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Purdue Equivalents (specific courses may vary by major)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Biology with lab</td>
<td>BIOL 11000-11100 or BIOL 13100 &amp; BIOL 23100 &amp; 23200 (lab) or BIOL 23000 &amp; upper level biology (including 2 hours of lab)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anatomy &amp; Physiology (recommended for the MCAT)</td>
<td>BIOL 20300-20400 or BIOL 30100-30200</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Chemistry with lab</td>
<td>CHM 11500-11600 or CHM 12500-12600 or CHM 12300-12400 or CHM 13600 or CHM 12901 (CHM 11500 credit exam recommended along with CHM 12901)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organic Chemistry with lab</td>
<td>CHM 25500-25600 or CHM 26100-26200 or CHM 26505-26605 or MCMP 20400-20500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>CHM 33300 or CHM 33900 or CHM 53300 or BCHM 30700 or BCHM 56100 or MCMP 20800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physics with lab</td>
<td>PHYS 22000-22100 or PHYS 23300-23400 or PHYS 17200-27200 or PHYS 17200 &amp; 24100* (may need 1 hr lab such as PHYS 25200) or ENGR 16100-16200*</td>
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<tr>
<td>English (if required usually need 2 semesters)</td>
<td>ENGL 10600 or ENGL 10800 or SCLA 10100*; plus another English course with strong writing component (either writing or literature)</td>
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<td>Psychology (1 semester)</td>
<td>PSY 12000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sociology (1 semester)</td>
<td>SOC 10000 or higher level sociology course (Anthropology is also acceptable)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statistics (recommended)</td>
<td>A course in statistics is recommended</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Med Planning Seminar (optional)</td>
<td><strong>BIOL 39600</strong> is a 0 credit 10 week class covering how to apply to medical school and other health professions programs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Ask individual podiatry schools if they will accept these courses toward their requirements.

**Student Organization:** Caduceus Club, American Medical Student Association
Researching Programs

- American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine [Accredited Podiatric Program list](https://www.aacpm.org/colleges/)

Applying

- Application is made through a centralized application service, the AACPMAS.
- Take an aptitude test. The MCAT (the Medical School Admissions Test) is the most commonly required. A few programs will accept the GRE (Graduate Record Exam) or the DAT (Dental Aptitude Test).
- Competitive applicants will have:
  - Strong academic performance including a grade point average of about a 3.3
  - Scores on the MCAT, GRE, or DAT that mirror national average or above
  - Leadership, teamwork, and communication skills
  - Undergraduate research experience
  - Volunteer and shadowing/observation experiences
  - Strong, positive letters of recommendation (mostly from science faculty and a podiatrist)
- Early application is recommended, typically by October of the senior year (assuming a 4 year graduation timeline).

Fee Assistance

- Visit specific school websites to learn if fee assistance is available.
- **MCAT Fee Assistance** through the AAMC [https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/applying-medical-school-process/fee-assistance-program/](https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/applying-medical-school-process/fee-assistance-program/)
- **GRE Fee Reduction Program** [https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about/fees/reductions/](https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about/fees/reductions/)

Employment Outlook

- According to the *Bureau of Labor Statistics* employment of podiatrists is expected to increase 10% through 2026.
- Due to our increasingly active society and our growing elderly population, more people will be turning to podiatrists for care.
- New legislation for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs classifies podiatry as podiatric surgery which places these professionals at the same pay level as physicians.
- Median salary for podiatrists in 2018 was $129,550 (though industry statistics show a higher salary).

Programs in the Region

- **Des Moines University College of Podiatric Medicine** Des Moines, IA [https://www.dmu.edu/cpms](https://www.dmu.edu/cpms)
- **Scholl/Rosalind Franklin College of Podiatric Medicine** North Chicago, IL [https://rosalindfranklin.edu/academics/dr-william-m-scholl-college-of-podiatric-medicine/](https://rosalindfranklin.edu/academics/dr-william-m-scholl-college-of-podiatric-medicine/)
- **Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine** Independence, OH [http://www.kent.edu/cpm](http://www.kent.edu/cpm)

More Information

- **American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine** [http://www.aacpm.org](http://www.aacpm.org)
- **American Podiatric Medical Association** [http://www.apma.org](http://www.apma.org)
- **AACPMAS** (Application service) [https://aacpmas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login](https://aacpmas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login)

Information for this career guide came from the above websites, [Explore Health Careers](https://explorehealthcareers.org/field/podiatric-medicine/), and the *Bureau of Labor Statistics* [https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/podiatrists.htm](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/podiatrists.htm).