Chiropractic Medicine (DC)

Career Description

- Doctors of Chiropractic Medicine help patients maintain overall health by emphasizing the inherent power of the body to heal itself without the use of drugs or surgery.
- As holistic healers, they stress many facets of a healthy life including exercise, nutrition, and rest. They do not, however, prescribe medications or perform surgery.
- Chiropractic doctors diagnose and treat patients with health problems associated with the muscular, nervous, and skeletal systems.
- Chiropractors take detailed histories; conduct physical, neurological, and orthopedic examinations; order laboratory tests; and interpret X-rays and other diagnostic images.
- Besides employing hands-on adjustments of imbalances in the patient’s skeletal system, chiropractors may use water, light, massage, ultrasound, acupuncture, acupressure, and heat therapy.
- Specialties in orthopedics, neurology, sports injuries, nutrition, rehabilitation, radiology, industrial consulting, family practice, or pediatrics are available by completing additional training and taking a specialty exam by that chiropractic association.

Becoming a Chiropractor

- To attend one of the accredited chiropractic programs in the United States, generally a bachelor’s degree in any major is needed (must have completed at least 90 credit hours) along with prerequisite coursework (see below).
- Some state licensing boards require a completed bachelor’s degree for licensure.
- Chiropractic school is a 3-4 year professional school program following an undergraduate degree; the degree earned will be a Doctor of Chiropractic (D.C.).
- Chiropractic students receive a minimum of 4200 hours of classroom, laboratory, and clinical experience during their training.

Preparation

- Observe a chiropractor to make sure this is the right field for you and that you truly understand what it means to be a Doctor of Chiropractic Medicine.
- Chiropractic schools will also want to see that you could handle a heavy course load while being active in extracurricular activities, providing community service, and gaining chiropractic experience.
- Chiropractic programs do not have a standard set of requirements, although many similarities exist. The initial courses are similar to other professional health care fields.
- Individual programs vary in the courses they require; a broad academic background is encouraged including completion of the following courses with grades of C or better.

Common Prerequisite Courses (pre-reqs set by each chiropractic program but similar to this list)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Recommended</th>
<th>Purdue Equivalents (specific courses may vary by major)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Sciences</td>
<td>Biology with labs</td>
<td>BIOL 11000-11100 or BIOL 13100 &amp; BIOL 23100 &amp; 23200 (lab) or BIOL 20300-20400</td>
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<td>Schools generally require 24 credit hours of life science including biology; general, organic &amp; biochemistry; physics; exercise physiology; nutrition; biomechanics</td>
<td>Inorganic Chemistry with labs</td>
<td>CHM 11500-11600 or 12500-12600 or 12300-12400 or 12901</td>
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<td>Organic Chemistry with labs</td>
<td>CHM 25500-25600 or CHM 25700 (with lab and a biochem course) (often need 6 hours of organic and/or biochemistry)</td>
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<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>BCHM 30700 or 56100 or CHM 33300 or 33900 or 53300 or MOMP 20800</td>
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<td>Physics with labs</td>
<td>PHYS 22000-22100 or at least 1 semester of physics and biomechanics, kinesiology, or exercise physiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Science &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>PSY 12000</td>
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<td>Social Sciences &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>At least 12 credit hours in addition to psychology and English requirements</td>
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<td>English Composition (6 credit hours)</td>
<td>ENGL 10600 or 10800, plus an upper level course</td>
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<td>Recommended courses include</td>
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<td>Optional</td>
<td>Pre-Med Planning Seminar</td>
<td>BIOL 39600-0 credit 10 week class covering how to apply to medical school and other health professions programs</td>
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Student Organization: Pre-Chiropractic Club, Caduceus Club

Research Programs
- Association of Chiropractic Colleges Find a School http://www.chirocolleges.org/prospective-students/find-a-school/

Applying
- Apply directly to individual schools.
- Some schools, though not all, require an interview.
- Competitive applicants have:
  - Strong academic performance including a grade point average of 3.2 or better
  - Leadership, teamwork, and communication skills
  - Undergraduate research experience is viewed positively but not required
  - Volunteer and shadowing/observation experiences
  - Strong positive letters of recommendation (mostly from faculty and chiropractors)
- Early application is recommended. Chiropractic programs often have more than one start date each year.

Fee Assistance
- Visit specific school websites to learn if fee assistance is available.

Employment Outlook
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job outlook for chiropractors is expected to increase by 12% through 2026.
- Chiropractors emphasize healthy lifestyle so chiropractic care is appealing to many health-conscious people.
- Demand for care depends, at least in part, on the ability to pay. Coverage of services by health insurance is critical and many plans now cover such services.
- Approximately 58 percent of Chiropractors are self-employed in a solo practice.
- Others work in group practices, teach, conduct research, or work in hospitals and clinics.
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics states the median salary was $68,640 in 2017 but many chiropractors in private practice make around $90,000.

Programs in the Region
- Palmer College of Chiropractic Davenport, IA http://www.palmer.edu
- National University of Health Science Lombard, IL https://www.nuhs.edu/admissions/chiropractic-medicine/
- Logan University Chesterfield, MO http://www.logan.edu/

More Information
- Association of Chiropractic Colleges http://www.chirocolleges.org/
- American Chiropractic Association http://www.acatoday.org/
- Council on Chiropractic Education http://www.cce-usa.org/

Other Fields to Consider
- Podiatry
- Physical Therapy
- Naturopathic Medicine