

# Chiropractic Medicine

- If a career as a chiropractor sounds rewarding, here's what you'll study in your degree program.
- **What degree levels are available?**
  - Chiropractors are required to hold a Doctor of Chiropractic (DC) degree from an accredited school. Along with classroom instruction, DC curriculums usually include clinical rotations and sometimes internships.
  - In your program you'll study a number of areas, some of which will include anatomy and physiology, biology, diagnosis and diagnosis imaging, and spinal manipulation.
- **Let's take a look at the Bachelor of Science (BS) / Doctor of Chiropractic (DC) program.**
  - BS/DC Degree Programs
    - These programs are generally designed for first-time college freshman and combine a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Biology program with a DC program. If you know early you want to work as a chiropractor, there are perks to these rigorous programs. Instead of completing a four-year undergraduate degree and a four-year DC program, a combined degree usually takes seven years. This can help you save time and some money.
    - As an example of coursework for a BS/DC program, D'Youville College offers the following BS courses:
      - Introduction to Biology
      - Genetics
      - Anatomy and Physiology
      - Biochemistry
      - General Chemistry
      - Calculus
      - General Physics
  - Once students move to the doctorate program, the curriculum includes:
    - Spinal Anatomy
    - Diagnostic Imaging
    - Ethics
    - Adjustive technique
    - Labs and clinical practice
- **Doctoral Degree Programs**
  - Depending on the school you choose, your hands-on experiences may be early and often. For example, the Southern California University of Health Sciences

gives students the chance to do community-based internships, community services, residencies and clinical rotations. Each option provides students with a different experience to prepare them for a career as a chiropractor.

- Students can treat the underserved with community service while residencies give students the skills to sit for advanced tests like the diplomate exam of the American Chiropractic Board of Sports Physicians.
- If you know you want to work in a certain area of care, most programs will allow you to choose a specialized track.

- **What certification will I need?**

- Every state and the District of Columbia require chiropractors to be licensed, but exam requirements differ.
- To work as a chiropractor in any state, you'll need to be licensed. All jurisdictions require aspiring chiropractors to pass their own exam, the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE) test or both. Check with your state to determine the requirements.
- There are several written tests administered by NBCE:
  - Part I: Tests six basic science areas, including general anatomy, spinal anatomy and physiology
  - Part II: Assesses six clinical science areas, including neuromusculoskeletal diagnosis, diagnostic imaging and principles of chiropractic
  - Part III: Includes case history, examinations and case management
  - Part IV: Required by many states, this includes x-ray interpretation and diagnosis, chiropractic technique and case management
- The NBCE also offers an elective computerized test in Acupuncture and post-licensure exams in Special Purposes Examination for Chiropractic (SPEC) and Ethics.

- **What will I learn in my courses?**

- Whether you enroll in a BS/DC or DC program, you'll be taught about the healing sciences. According to the American Chiropractic Association (ACA), a DC program gives students an even more extensive education in topics such as:
  - Public health
  - Nutrition
  - Rehabilitation
  - Anatomy
  - Physiology
- A good chunk of your time will be spent actually working with patients with a required one-year clinical program.

- **How long will it take?**
  - According to the American Chiropractic Association, a DC curriculum takes a minimum of 4,200 hours of classroom, lab and clinical experience. This typically equals out to about four years. The first two years are usually spent in the classroom and labs, while the final two years are devoted to clinical experiences.
  - If you choose to take the BS/DC combined degree route, you'll commit yourself to about seven years of study.
  
- **Are online programs available?**
  - Online programs for DC degrees aren't available since the education requires so much clinical and lab work. Courses are taught in a traditional classroom setting.
  - If you're planning to earn a bachelor's degree first, you can find many online programs to fit your schedule and budget. If you plan to attend chiropractic school, plan on taking relevant science courses, such as biology and anatomy, during your undergraduate studies.
  
- **How much will my education cost?**
  - Chiropractic school tuition varies, but tuition\* can range from \$11,000 to \$20,000. The wide range of tuition costs is partially related to a program's time frame. They generally run between nine and 12 months depending on the school.
  - While tuition is certainly not cheap, students have plenty of financial aid options at their disposal. This is another instance where accreditation plays a role. You may not be eligible for federal loans if your school isn't accredited (and therefore recognized by the U.S. Department of Education).
  - You'll also need to set aside money for certification fees. If your state requires certification by the NBCE, be prepared for a number of fees. For the general written exam, the fees include:
    - Part I: \$585
    - Part II: \$585
    - Part III: \$585
    - Part IV: \$1,335
    - Individual subjects (Part I and II): \$275
    - Physiotherapy (elective): \$325
  - \*Cost of tuition only. Prices do not reflect other fees.
  - Always check with your state board to determine if you need to take a state-administered test and what the costs are.

- **Are there prerequisites?**
  - Each school differs in their prerequisites to enter a DC program, but generally they look something like this:
    - Minimum of 90 semester credits in undergraduate studies (Bachelor of Science path)
    - Minimum number of credits in life science courses with lab components
    - GPA of 3.0 or higher
    - Letters of recommendation
    - Interview with faculty
    - Official transcripts
    - GRE scores
  - Even if you have a lower GPA than required, don't abandon your plans. Some chiropractic schools provide an alternate track for students with a lower GPA. Inquire with the school about what you need to do to satisfy admission requirements. You can find a complete explanation of admission requirements on each chiropractic school's website.
  
- **What accreditation is there for chiropractic schools?**
  - Accreditation is a seal of approval that a school's chiropractic program meets the highest industry standards.
  - The Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE) is the main accreditation body. Currently, the organization has accredited 15 schools across the country. Some schools also have regional accreditation.
  - If you're completing undergraduate courses or earning a bachelor's degree, you'll also want to ensure the school is accredited.