DOCTOR OF MEDICINE

Curriculum

The Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree requires a minimum of four years of study. The focus of the medical curriculum is to prepare students for supervised medical practice through clinical integration of material throughout all four years of study. Students in the pre-clerkship portion of the curriculum (approximately 18 months) do not take separate courses in the traditional basic science disciplines of gross anatomy, biochemistry, genetics, physiology, histology, microbiology, immunology, pharmacology, pathology, and neuroscience. Rather, such content is appropriately organized into integrated blocks of instruction (3 to 19 weeks in duration depending upon the theme of the block). Students in the clerkship portion of the curriculum (approximately 30 months) rotate on clinical service in required clerkships (internal medicine, surgery, psychiatry, pediatrics, obstetrics/gynecology, family medicine, emergency medicine, critical care medicine, and an acting internship) and also have opportunities for rotations in elective clerkships and areas of interest. Grades are issued for individual blocks and clerkships on an honors/pass/fail basis. Students are required to take and pass and/or achieve a minimum score on National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) customized comprehensive exams and subject exams at various points in the program.

The ethical and social aspects of medical practice receive special emphasis in the Humanities, Ethics, Altruism and Leadership (HEAL) courses, which provide lecture, discussion and small group case studies that focus on the humanistic concerns in modern medicine.

During the clerkship portion of the curriculum, students receive clinical training in a variety of inpatient and outpatient settings associated with our main clinical teaching campuses located in Bryan/College Station (Family Medicine Residency, the College Station Medical Center, Baylor Scott & White Health and St. Joseph Regional Health Center), Dallas (Baylor Scott & White Health, Cook Children’s Medical Center, and Timberlawn Mental Health System), Houston (Houston Methodist Hospital), Round Rock (Lone Star Circle of Care, Baylor Scott & White Health, and various facilities within St David’s Healthcare and Seton Healthcare, including Dell Children’s and the Austin State Hospital), and Temple (Baylor Scott & White Health and the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System, as well as nearby Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center at Ft. Hood). Clerkships in Internal Medicine, Surgery, Family Medicine, Psychiatry, Pediatrics and Obstetrics/Gynecology are required. Also, clerkships in Emergency Medicine, Critical Care Medicine, and acting internship are required. A wide variety of elective clinical experiences are available. Some clinical rotations can be completed at alternate locations around the state (e.g. Pediatrics at Driscoll Children’s Hospital in Corpus Christi). Students may also design custom learning experiences for electives or participate in offerings at other medical colleges on a limited basis.

Policies and Regulations

The College of Medicine (COM) Student Handbook is published on the COM website under the Office of Student Affairs. This handbook is the official statement of rules and regulations that govern student conduct and student activities at the COM. The handbook can be viewed online on the following site: http://medicine.tamhsc.edu/student-affairs/docs/handbook.pdf.

Professionalism

Students entering a formal medical education program are expected to uphold and adhere to the ethical and behavioral standards of the profession of medicine. The development and maintenance of a professional attitude is an ongoing responsibility of each student. Evaluation of professional behavior is an integral part of the curriculum and will be a factor in assigning grades and determining promotion, retention or dismissal.

College of Medicine Admission Information (http://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/admission/college-school-information/medicine)

Program Requirements

The Degree of Doctor of Medicine Core Curriculum

The curriculum provides the basic science and clinical foundations that will prepare medical students for supervised medical practice in residency and beyond.

Pre-Clerkship Phase

The first 18 months of the curriculum (pre-clerkship portion) focus on the fundamentals of biomedical science and consist of two components, Foundations and Organ Systems.

Students start the first year of medical school with the Foundations blocks, which continue through mid-April of the first calendar year. Foundations blocks emphasize the basic structure of the human body and basic principles of other medical science disciplines, i.e., gross anatomy, histology, basic principles of biochemistry, genetics, pharmacology, and cell physiology. Foundations blocks also include Neuroscience and Introduction to Disease, which covers basic pathophysiology, immunology, and bacteriology. In the addition to the instruction of these basic medical sciences, students take integrated courses which cover medical humanities, ethics, leadership, and other important professional development topics, as well as the Introduction to Clinical Skills course, which includes patient history-taking and doctor-patient communication skills and physical diagnosis. Further, students are introduced to Evidence-Based Medicine key principles, Scholarly Work foundations and Research principles.

By mid-April of the first calendar year, students transition into the Organ Systems blocks, which conclude the following winter. The Organ Systems blocks cover normal function, pathophysiology and disease-related aspects of the specific organ systems including the basic therapeutic approach to disease. The disciplines covered in Organ Systems blocks include organ-based physiology, organ system/disease-related biochemistry and genetics, pathology, microbiology, immunology, pharmacology, introductory pediatrics and introductory internal medicine.

Students take a summer break after two Organ Systems blocks have been delivered, and this break provides opportunities to explore scholarly activities, service learning, and other educational activities. Throughout the Organ Systems blocks, students continue to build skills in Evidence-Based Medicine, Scholarly Work and Research principles, and pursue continued learning experiences in the humanities, ethics, and leadership.

Students also participate in required coursework within a structured Preceptorship course, which includes clinical activities with patients, as well as simulated patient experiences and objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs).

Pre-Clerkship (Foundations)
Blocks/Courses

- Foundations of Medicine I
- Foundations of Medicine II
- Medical Gross Anatomy
- Neuroscience
- Introduction to Disease
- Humanities, Ethics, Altruism and Leadership (HEAL) I & II
- Evidence Based Medicine/Scholarship and Research I & II
- Introduction to Clinical Skills I & II

Pre-Clerkship (Organ Systems)

Blocks/Courses

- Cardiovascular
- Respiratory
- Hematology/Oncology
- Gastrointestinal/Metabolism/Nutrition
- Renal/Genitourinary
- Endocrinology/Reproductive Science
- Integument/Musculoskeletal
- Humanities, Ethics, Altruism and Leadership (HEAL) III
- Evidence Based Medicine / Scholarship & Research III
- Introduction to Clinical Skills Preceptorship

Years Three and Four

The Clerkship portion of the curriculum follows delivery of the Organ Systems blocks, begins in January of the second year of medical school and extends until graduation. During this 30-month period, students rotate on clinical service in required clerkships (internal medicine, surgery, psychiatry, pediatrics, obstetrics/gynecology, family medicine, emergency medicine, critical care medicine, and an acting internship) and also have opportunities for rotations in elective clerkships and areas of interest. During this time, students receive clinical training in several different patient care venues and locations, including private-practice, academic, and governmental institutions in Austin, Bryan-College Station, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Houston, Round Rock and Temple. Opportunities for rotations in other regions and states exist, as do opportunities for global medical mission work and service learning.

Clerkship Phase (Phase III)

Phase III Clerkships/Courses

Required Clerkships:

- Family Medicine (6 weeks)
- Internal Medicine (8 weeks)
- Obstetrics and Gynecology (6 weeks)
- Pediatrics (6 weeks)
- Psychiatry (6 weeks)
- Surgery (8 weeks)

Required Course:

- Principles of Radiology

Phase IV Rotations/Electives

Required Rotations/Courses:

- Acting Internship in Primary Care Medicine (4 weeks)
- Critical Care Medicine (4 weeks)
- Emergency Medicine (4 weeks)
- Becoming a Physician IV (2 weeks)

Electives:

- Electives are offered on all COM campuses. Students may choose from pre-determined electives, design custom learning experiences, or participate in offerings at other medical colleges on a limited basis.

Requirements for Graduation for MD Degree

COM grants the MD degree after the completion of the four-year program to those students who have attained a grade of at least a “Pass” in the courses and clerkships in the medical curriculum, and who have satisfactorily demonstrated to the faculty the personal and professional qualities essential to the practice of medicine. In addition, passing scores on the USMLE Step 1 and USMLE Step 2-Clinical Knowledge exams must be obtained. Students are expected to complete requirements for the MD degree within six (6) years, not counting time on leave of absence or in pursuit of advanced degrees, e.g. an MD/PhD.

COM students who qualify for the MD degree and who attain a GPA of 3.50 or above in their professional medical curricula, are awarded a degree “With Honors.” Students who enter the curriculum with advanced standing are not eligible to be named honor graduates.

Commencement for COM students who have earned the MD degree takes place at the end of the spring semester.