DOCTOR OF MEDICINE

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 phase 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 and elective phases of the curriculum (approximately 30 months) rotate on clinical service in required clerkships (internal medicine, surgery, psychiatry, pediatrics, obstetrics/gynecology, family medicine, radiology, 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), 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 campus or clinical teaching sites located in Bryan/College Station, Dallas, Houston, Round Rock, and Temple. Clerkships in Internal Medicine, Surgery, Family Medicine, Psychiatry, Pediatrics, Radiology 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 School of Medicine Student Handbook is published on the School of Medicine website under the Office of Student Affairs. This handbook is the official statement of rules and regulations that govern student conduct and student activities. The handbook can be viewed online on the following site; https://medicine.tamu.edu/academics/students/index.html (https://medicine.tamu.edu/academics/students/).

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.
Doctor of Medicine

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 administered in consecutive blocks. 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. Students take integrated courses which cover medical humanities, ethics, leadership, important professional development topics, and Introduction to Clinical Skills, which includes patient history-taking and doctor-patient communication skills and physical diagnosis. By mid-April of the first year, students transition into the Organ Systems blocks. 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. During the Organ Systems blocks, students continue to build skills in integrated humanities and clinical skills.

Clinical Phase

During the Clinical portion of the curriculum, students rotate on clinical service in required clerkships and have opportunities for elective rotations in areas of interest. During this time, students have the opportunity to experience 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. 18 month curriculum: Courses may be taken beginning with the Spring of Year 2 through the end of Spring of Year 3. Required rotations/courses. These courses are available all year. Electives are offered on all COM campuses. Students may choose from predetermined electives, design custom learning experiences, or participate in offerings at other medical colleges on a limited basis.

- Selective Courses: Within the elective time provided to students, 15 credit hours must follow the specialty specific recommendations. The selective courses were created to help students maximize opportunities and focus training that is complementary to their career goals. Selectives are based on career specialty choice.
- Elective Courses: The Texas A&M College of Medicine electives have been developed to accommodate the diverse educational needs of our students. Students must obtain 24.5 credit hours of electives. The electives provide students the opportunity to further develop their medical knowledge, skills and attitudes. In addition to the electives that have been developed by the college, students may develop student-initiated electives. Student Initiated Electives (SIEs) allow students in good standing great latitude in designing unique elective experiences. All other electives rules/guidelines must also be followed.

Requirements for Graduation for MD Degree

The Doctor of Medicine degree is awarded at the completion of the four-year program to those students who have attained at least a grade of P or S (or higher) in all courses and clerkships in the medical curriculum, who are not on probation, and who have satisfactorily demonstrated to the faculty the personal and professional qualities essential to the practice of medicine. Students are expected to complete requirements for the MD degree within six (6) years, not counting time away on leave of absence or pursuit of advanced degrees, such as an MD/PhD.

- A passing grade in all required courses and clerkships must be achieved in order to receive the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree.
- The student must obtain at least 194 credit hours to qualify for graduation.
- Passage of USMLE Step 1 and Step 2-CK is required for graduation.
- Student must pass USMLE Step 1 for promotion to the 4th year.

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.