PODIATRY PRIMER

WHAT DOES A PODIATRIST DO?

- Diagnose foot ailments such as tumors, ulcers, fractures, skin or nail diseases, and congenital or acquired deformity such as weak feet and foot imbalance.
- Use innovative methods to treat conditions such as corns, calluses, bunions, heel spurs, ingrown toenails, arch problems, shortened tendons, cysts, bone disorders, and abscesses.
- Design corrective orthotics, plaster casts, and strappings to correct deformities.
- Design flexible casting for immobilization of foot and ankle fractures, sprains, or other injuries.
- Correct walking patterns and balance, and promote the overall ability to move about more efficiently and comfortably.
- Provide individual consultations to patients concerning continued treatment of disorders and preventive foot care.
- Refer patients to other physicians when symptoms observed in the feet indicate disorders, such as diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, or kidney disease.

From the online American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine, 2012

WHAT DEGREE DO I NEED TO BE A PODIATRIST?

Podiatric medicine requires four years of medical education at an accredited college of podiatric medicine, followed by a three-year Podiatric Medicine and Surgery Residency. There are currently nine accredited schools in the United States that grant the Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM) degree.

WHAT CLASSES DO I NEED TO TAKE TO GET INTO PODIATRY SCHOOL?

Podiatric schools require the same prerequisite courses as allopathic medical schools:

- **General Biology (8-12 hours)**
- **General Chemistry (8 hours)**
- **Organic Chemistry (8 hours)**
- **General Physics (8 hours)**
- **English (6-8 hours)**

*Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine requires 12 semester hours of Biological science.
**California School of Podiatric Medicine requires 8 semester hours of English/Communication studies.

WHAT TEST DO I NEED TO TAKE FOR ADMISSION?

Traditionally the MCAT has been the only standardized test required for admissions to the colleges of podiatric medicine. However, some colleges will accept the US DAT or GRE in lieu of the MCAT.

WHAT DOES A COMPETITIVE APPLICANT LOOK LIKE?

In 2012, the overall GPA of matriculants to podiatry programs was 3.3 and the science GPA was 3.1. MCAT scores in 2012 averaged 6.7 on Verbal Reasoning, 6.8 on Physical Science, and 7.4 on Biological Science. Given the slightly lower academic expectation of Podiatry program, this is a good alternative for students whose GPA and MCAT scores are too low for allopathic or osteopathic medical programs.

HOW DO I APPLY?

The American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine Application Service (AACPMAS) allows podiatric medical applicants to use a single web-based application and one set of transcripts to apply to multiple schools and colleges of podiatric medicine. All nine schools and colleges of podiatric medicine currently participate in this national service. To learn more or to begin an application, please click here.

WHEN DO I APPLY?

APPLY EARLY! DPM programs use a rolling admission model and nearly all seats are filled prior to the deadline. AACPMAS begins processing admission applications the first Wednesday in August for fall Admission the following year. Deadline Dates are as follows: For priority consideration April 1st of each year for the upcoming fall admission. The final AACPMAS deadline date is June 30th of each year for fall admission of the same year.

WHAT SITES DO I NEED TO CHECK OUT?

American Podiatric Medical Association: [http://www.apma.org](http://www.apma.org)
American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine: [www.aacpm.org](http://www.aacpm.org)
Council on Podiatric Medicine: [http://www.cpme.org](http://www.cpme.org)