

## Contact Info:

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## Explore UWM's Pre-Podiatry Program

Podiatrists, also known as doctors of podiatric medicine (DPM's), diagnose and treat disorders, diseases, and injuries of the foot and lower leg to keep this part of the body working properly. Podiatrists may prescribe drugs, order physical therapy, set fractures and perform surgery as a routine part of their practice. Most podiatrists are in general practice; some specialize in surgery, orthopedics, primary care or public health.

## Majors for Pre-Podiatry Students

It is important to note that "pre-podiatry" is not a major. The general admissions standards for podiatric programs is quite science intensive, leading most students to choose a chemistry or biology major. As long as you complete the suggested prerequisites, though, you could choose any other major you wish.

Regardless of the major, students will be counseled on the required science courses needed for application to a podiatric program, and those courses will be integrated into the student's schedule.

## Advising

Students who identify themselves as pre-podiatry will be assigned to a specialized advisor who understands the long-term planning required to successfully complete the bachelor's program and move on to podiatry school. Because many science courses have prerequisites and follow a very structured order, it is important that students plan their course schedule very carefully in consultation with their advisor. Getting off track as early as freshman year can delay graduation.

## After Undergraduate Studies

To practice podiatry, further education and training is required beyond the bachelor's degree. Upon completion of a bachelor's degree, students enter a DPM program (Doctor of Podiatric Medicine). DPMs are licensed caregivers and can prescribe drugs and perform surgery.

The DPM is a four year program after completion of the bachelor's degree. Most states then require a three year residency after the DPM is earned. Thus, you can expect to spend seven to eight years in school and hands-on training after college before you become a full-fledged podiatrist.

There are only nine accredited schools of podiatry in the United States. While the admissions requirements may be just slightly below that for medical school, it is just as competitive to get into a podiatry program as it is to get into medical school because of the limited number of spaces available nationwide. You can make yourself an attractive candidate by keeping your grades as high as possible, compiling a portfolio of relevant experiences through volunteer work or part-time jobs, and honing your communication skills to prepare for the admissions interview, practicing for the MCAT standardized test, and building relationships with professors and supervisors who can provide letters of recommendation.

**Quick Fact:** Podiatry school applicants take the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) late in the spring of their junior year or during the summer between their junior and senior year of college. This multiple-choice, computer-based exam measures reasoning, critical thinking, problem solving, writing ability, and knowledge of biology, the physical sciences, and sociocultural and psychological principles.

## Career Outlook

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects shortages across the health care professions, including podiatrists. The profession is expected to grow by 14% between 2014 and 2024, much faster than the average for other professions and due in large part to the needs of an aging population

The average salary can vary greatly by location and experience. Considering all locales and experience levels, a nationwide average is \$119,340. Entry level positions usually are in the range of \$75,000 to \$90,000.

The work hours of the profession are an attractive feature to many individuals. Many practicing podiatrists find that they work on average 40 to 50 hours a week. The practice of podiatric medicine lends itself to flexible hours, too, making it an appealing profession for individuals looking for a work-life balance.

## UWM Advantages

Podiatric Medical Schools, like all professional health programs, can be quite expensive. It is important to keep undergraduate debt as low as possible. UWM is one of the most affordable options in southeastern Wisconsin. In addition, UWM has close ties with podiatric medical schools and the American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine (AACPM).

UWM offers a special admission track to the Rosalind Franklin-Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine. Students who successfully complete the admissions requirements are offered early review and preferential admission to the Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM) program. In some instances, students can enter the DPM program after only three years of undergraduate study and transfer their first year of the DPM program back to UWM to complete their Bachelor's degree. Students who elect to follow a more traditional four-year plan, are still given preferential admissions status.

UWM and the national AACPM have partnered to offer an annual full-day conference to learn more about podiatric medical education. In addition to seminars, the conference includes a two-hour MCAT prep session, and a hands-on casting lab to teach students how to cast broken bones.

UWM and local DPM's partner to offer DPM information sessions and suturing clinics every semester to allow students to experience some of the basics of suturing that podiatric physicians and surgeons use in their practice.

## Special Opportunities

UWM students are encouraged to enhance their classroom studies with related experience because your portfolio of experience will also be considered when you apply to podiatry school. Your pre-podiatry advisor can help you identify volunteer and part-time job opportunities.

» **Medical Scribe Jobs:** Scribes assist physicians with medical documentation and the creation and maintenance of medical records using a Workstation on Wheels (WOW). Two companies – PhysAssist and Elite Medical Scribes – offer part-time jobs to highly-qualified UWM students. Students who are selected receive in-depth exposure to clinical medicine and medical terminology.

» **Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP):** In partnership with Wheaton Franciscan Health Care, UWM student volunteers interact and visit with patients, assisting with feeding, mobility exercises, orientation therapy, or therapeutic interventions involving music, massage, or reading. There is a minimum 6 month commitment, one day a week for 3 - 4 hours/per week.

» **Vive Peru:** This summer medical mission partners students with medical professionals to bring health care to Peru.

» **Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR):** OUR provides access to research experiences for undergraduates. Students work directly with faculty members and graduate students in their chosen field of study.

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## Suggested Pre-Podiatry Courses

One year of general Biology with lab (Bio Sci 150, 152)
Genetics (Bio 325)
Three semesters of General Chemistry with lab (Chem 100, 102, 104)
One year of Organic Chemistry with lab (Chem 343, 344 & 345)
Biochemistry (Chem 501)
One year of Physics with lab (Physics 120/121 & 122/123)
Intro to Sociology (Sociology 101)
6 credits of English (English 101, 102)
Public Speaking (Communication 103)
Intro to Psychology (Psychology 101) (It is also recommended that students take a few additional upper-level social/behavioral science courses.)

