



Education and Training: Family Physicians versus Naturopaths

Naturopaths—also known as “Doctors of Naturopathy,” “Doctors of Natural Medicine,” “Naturopathic Physicians,” and the like—receive their education typically through a four-year degree program that confers a Doctorate in Naturopathy (ND) or Doctorate in Naturopathic Medicine (NMD). Currently, there are four institutions in the United States— Bastyr University, National College of Natural Medicine, Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine, and the University of Bridgeport—accredited by the Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME), the only accrediting organization recognized by the US Department of Education. Naturopathic medicine schools do not require students to satisfactorily pass an entrance exam, such as the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) or Graduate Record Examination (GRE). CNME requires the course of study provided at these institutions be at 4,100 total clock hours in length.

This figure includes clinical education clock hours beginning in the third year of naturopathic study. At least 1,200 clinical clock hours are required, 60 percent of which (720) hours must be in direct patient care. Graduates of naturopathic degree programs are not required to undergo post-graduate training, like the residency required of medical school graduates. Optional 1 year programs are offered by some institutions. The University of Bridgeport, for example, offers a program that includes from 535 to 1,035 total hours of direct patient contact and didactic learning.

Family Physicians receive their education typically through a four-year degree program at one of the 130 accredited medical schools in the United States. Students must pass the Medical College Admissions Test for entrance into medical school. In 2005, the average score of matriculants was 30.2 of a possible 45. Medical students spend nearly 9,000 hours in lectures, clinical study, lab and direct patient care. The overall training process begins with medical school and continues through residency. During their time in medical school, students take two “step” exams, called the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE), and must take core clerkships, or periods of clinical instruction. Passing both exams and the clerkships grants students the Medical Doctor (MD) degree, which entitles them to start full clinical training in a residency program.

Family medicine residency programs, which are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), require three years of training. As with other specialties, family medicine residency programs have specific requirements with certain numbers of hours that must be completed for board certification. They are designed to provide integrated experiences in ambulatory, community and inpatient environments during three years of concentrated study and hands-on training.

The first year of residency, called the internship year, is when the final “step” of the USMLE (Step 3 exam) is taken. During their three years of training, residents must meet the program requirements for both residency education in family medicine and certification by the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM). Specific requirements for family medicine residency training vary by program. After three “program years” of training are completed and all requirements are met, residents are eligible to take the certification exam by the ABFM. Toward the end of residency, physicians also apply for licensure from their state medical boards, which determines where they can practice as a board-certified family physician. Although each state is different in their requirements for initial medical licensure, it is a necessity that physicians pass Step 3 of the USMLE.

The below tables offer a side-by-side comparison of the education and training involved in becoming a family physician versus the requirements to become a naturopath.

Degrees Required and Time to Completion

	Undergraduate Degree	Entrance Exam	School	Residency	Residency Completion Time
Family Physician (MD or DO)	Standard 4-year BA/BS	Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT)	4 years	REQUIRED	3 years
Naturopath (ND or NMD)	Standard 4-year BA/BS	None Required	4 years	OPTIONAL	1 year

Medical/Professional School and Residency/Post-Graduate Hours for Completion

	Lecture Hours (Pre-Clinical Years)	Study Hours (Pre-Clinical Years)	Combined** Hours (Clinical Years)	Residency Hours	TOTAL HOURS
Family Physician	2,700	3,000	6,000	9,000 – 10,000	20,700 – 21,700
Naturopath***	1,500	1,665	2,600	535 – 1,035	5,505 – 6,485
DIFFERENCE	1,200	1,335	3,400	8,465 – 8,965	15,195 – 15,215

*Council on Naturopathic Medical Education CNME standards were used for this comparison.

**Clinical and lecture hours

***Naturopath “Lecture Hours” and “Combined Hours” are averaged across publicly-available curricula advertised on the web sites of the four CNME-accredited institutions of naturopathic study (Bastyr University, National College of Natural Medicine, Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine, and the University of Bridgeport).

Naturopathic Medical Education Comparative Curricula

Comparing Curricula of Naturopathic Medical Schools, Conventional Medical Schools, and Non-accredited "N.D." Programs

National College of Natural Medicine	Bastyr University - Naturopathic Medicine	Yale University	Johns Hopkins	Medical College of Wisconsin	Trinity College of Natural Health	Clayton College of Natural Health
Federally and Regionally Accredited Naturopathic Medical School	Federally and Regionally Accredited Naturopathic Medical School	Federally and Regionally Accredited Conventional Medical School	Federally and Regionally Accredited Conventional Medical School	Federally and Regionally Accredited Conventional Medical School	Non-accredited Natural Health Training	Non-accredited Natural Health Training
Basic and Clinical Sciences						
Anatomy, Cell biology, Physiology, Histology, Pathology, Biochemistry, Pharmacology, Lab diagnosis, Neuroscience, Clinical physical diagnosis, Genetics, Pharmacognosy, Bio-statistics, Epidemiology, Public Health, History and philosophy, Ethics and other coursework.						
1548	1639	1420	1771	1363	272	100
Clerkships and Allopathic Therapeutics						
including lecture and clinical instruction in Dermatology, Family Medicine, Psychiatry, Medicine, Radiology, Pediatrics, Obstetrics, Gynecology, Neurology, Surgery, Ophthalmology, and clinical electives.						
2224	1925	2891 (+thesis)	3391	2311	0	0
Naturopathic Therapeutics						
including Botanical medicine, Homeopathy, Oriental medicine, Hydrotherapy, Natural manipulative therapy, Ayurvedic medicine, Naturopathic Case Analysis/Management, Naturopathic Philosophy, Advanced Naturopathic Therapeutics.						
588	633	0	0	0	336	300
Therapeutic Nutrition						
144	132	0	0	0	176	50
Counseling						
144	143	included in psychiatry (see above)	included in psychiatry (see above)	included in psychiatry (see above)	0	25
TOTAL HOURS OF TRAINING						
4668	4472	4311 (+thesis)	5162	3674	784 (+dissertation)	475 (+dissertation)

HOW I EARNED MY "DOCTORATE" IN NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE AT BASTYR UNIVERSITY

2007-2011

Britt Marie Deegan

Pre Clinical Courses

BioChemistry	132 Hours
Human Anatomy Lecture/ Lab	231 Hours
Human Physiology Lecture/Lab 1-2	154 Hours
Human Physiology 3	33 Hours
Histology	66 Hours
Embryology	33 Hours
Neuroscience	77 Hours
Immunology	44 Hours
Human Pathology 1-3	132 Hours
Clin Lab Diagnosis 1-3	165 Hours
Phys/Clin Diag Lect 1-3	66 Hours
Phys/Clin Diag Lab 1-3	99 Hours
Pharmacology	55 Hours
Fund. of Research Design	22 Hours
Infectious Diseases	55 Hours
Total Lecture Hours:	1364 Hours

Clinical Courses

Medical Procedures	33 Hours
Minor Office Procedures	96 Hours
EENT	22 Hours
Gynecology	22 Hours
Orthopedics	22 Hours
Dermatology	22 Hours
Oncology	22 Hours
Pediatrics 1	22 Hours
Sports Medicine	22 Hours
Gastroenterology	22 Hours
Neurology	22 Hours
Pediatrics 2	22 Hours
Family Medicine	22 Hours
Cardiology	33 Hours
Radio Interp Lecture and Lab 1	55 Hours
Radio Interp Lect and Lab 2	33 Hours
Geriatrics	22 Hours
Endocrinology	33 Hours
Urology	16,5 Hours
Rheumatology	16,5 Hours
Diagnostic imaging	22 Hours
Pulmonary medicine	16,5 Hours
Total Lecture Hours	618,5 Hours

Electives

Clinical Formulations of Bot Med	14 Hours
IV Therapy	12 Hours
Naturopathic fertility management	22 Hours
Standards of care *elective course	22 Hours

Other category:

Normal Maternity	33 Hours
Fundamentals of TCM	33 Hours
Clinical Ecology	22 Hours
Environmental Medicine	16,5 Hours
Public Health	16,5 Hours
Clinic entry 1	11 Hours
Clinic entry 2	11 Hours

Counseling

Naturopathic Counseling 1	33 Hours
Naturopathic Counseling 2	33 Hours
Naturopathic Counseling 3	22 Hours
Psychological Assessment	22 Hours
Addictions and Disorders	22 Hours
Total	132 Hours

Phytotherapy/ Herbal Medicine

Botanical Medicine 1	26,5 Hours
Botanical Medicine 2	22 Hours
Botanical Medicine 3	22 Hours
Botanical Medicine 4	26,5 Hours
Botanical Medicine 5	26,5 Hours
Botanical Medicine Dispensary Lab	22 Hours
Total	146 Hours

Nutrition

Foods, Dietary Systems and Assess	44 Hours
Diet and Nutrient Therapy 1	33 Hours
Diet and Nutirent Therapy 2	33 Hours
Macro and Mirco Nutrients	33 Hours
Total	143 Hours

Homeopathy Courses

Homeoapthy 1	22 Hours
Homeopathy 2	33 Hours
Homeoapthy 3	33 Hours
Total	88 Hours

Physical Medicine

Naturopathic Manipulation 1	22 Hours
Naturopathic Manipulation 2	33 Hours
Naturopathic Manipulation 3	33 Hours
Naturopathic Manipulation 4	33 Hours
Hydrotherapy/ Physio Lect/ Lab	44 Hours
Myofascial Analysis	33 Hours
Total	198 Hours



Advanced Pediatrics	22 Hours
Counseling for Eating Disorders	33 Hours
Plant Identification	unknownr Hours
Tai Chi	unknownr Hours
Whole Foods	40 Hours
Clinical Biofeedback	22 Hours
History of Medicine	22 Hours

CLINICAL TRAINING HOURS

Patient Care Rotations (17)	748 Hours
Counseling Rotation (1)	44 Hours
Physical Medicine Shifts (4)	176 Hours
Precepting	132 Hours
Total Clinical Training Hours	1100 Hours

Professional Development

Practice Management 1	22 Hours
Practice Management 2	22 Hours
Jurisprudence	11 Hours
Ethics	11 Hours
Total	44 Hours

Naturopathic Theory

Naturopathic Medicine in Global Context	33 Hours
Naturopathic Medicine in Historical Context	33 Hours
Fundamentals of Naturopathic Clinical Theory	22 Hours
Advanced Naturopathic Therapeutics 1	22 Hours
Advanced Naturopathic Therapeutics 2	22 Hours
Healing Systems	11 Hours
Naturopathic Case Analysis and Management 1	33 Hours
Naturopathic Case Analysis and Manag. 2	22 Hours
Total	165 Hours



School	Location	Acceptance Rate	Enrollment	Average GPA	% Female
University of Washington School of Medicine	Seattle, Washington	4%	918	3.7	52%
University of Arizona School of Medicine	Tucson, Arizona	3%	469	3.7	48%
Oregon Health and Science School of Medicine	Portland, Oregon	3%	527	3.3	55%
Rush Medical College	Chicago, Illinois	2%	527	3.7	50%
Yale University School of Medicine	New Haven, Connecticut	2%	402	3.9	50%

Source: Findthebest.com (www.startclass.com/)

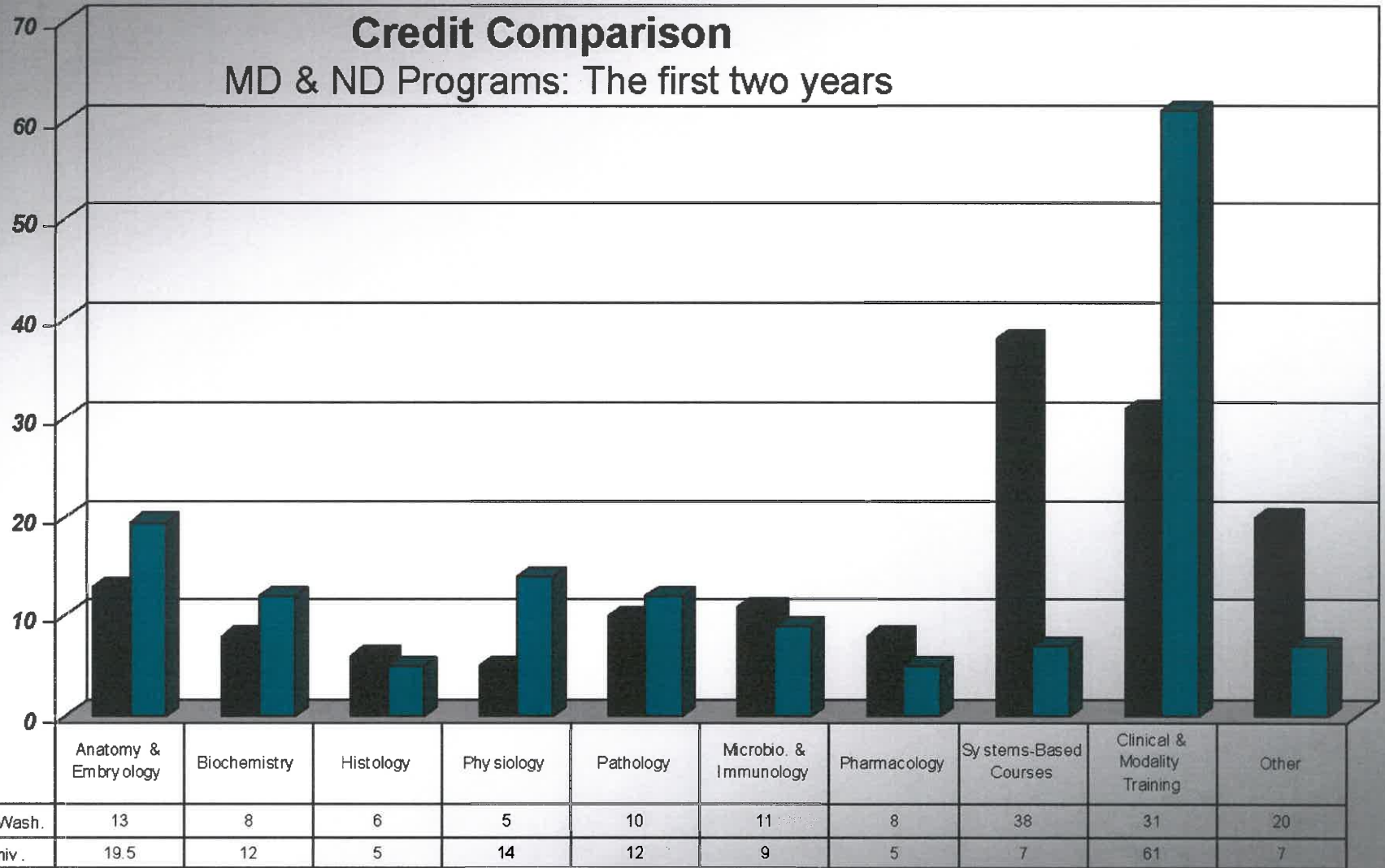
School	Location	Acceptance Rate	Enrollment	Average GPA	% Female
Bastyr University	Kenmore, Washington	68%	591	3.3	79
Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine	Tempe, Arizona	65%	411	3.2	73
National College of Natural Medicine	Portland, Oregon	82%	442	3.4	80
National University of Health Sciences	Lombard, Illinois	76%*	749*	3.0*	41*
University of Bridgeport	Bridgeport, Connecticut	100%	106	not reported	not reported
Boucher Institute of Naturopathic Medicine	New Westminster, British Columbia	56%	154	3.4	84%
Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine	Toronto, Ontario	73%	542	3.4	80%

Source: Princeton Review (<http://www.princetonreview.com/>)

* Data for National University of Health Science are combined statistics for programs of Doctorate in Naturopathic Medicine and Doctorate of Chiropractic.

Credit Comparison

MD & ND Programs: The first two years



Credit comparison for 2010 between the MD program at the University of Washington and the ND program at Bastyr University. The data shown here is not meant to represent all naturopathic and conventional medical programs, but to serve as an example of course and credit comparison between the two areas of study. This comparison represents areas of study covered during the first two years of medical school.

Source: University of Washington Medicine. *Basic Science Curriculum*. <http://uwmedicine.washington.edu/Education/MD-Program/Current-Students/Curriculum/Basic-Sciences-Curriculum/Pages/default.aspx>.

Source: Bastyr University, *Curriculum for Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine, 2009-2010*. <http://www.bastyr.edu/education/naturopath/degree-curriculum/4-year-track.asp>