

FOUNDATIONS & FRONTIERS FAQ



How will I interact with faculty members?

Our curriculum will provide what you need, when you need it, as often as you need it. We have been recording and streaming all of our lectures for the past 15 years. Most students prefer to watch them at home on 1.5x speed and stop and start the lectures at will in order to maximize their learning. Our instructional format allows us to move away from the traditional 50 minute lecture and streamline the content. Most videos will be between 20 and 30 minutes—this enhances attentiveness, focus and retention of the material. Students will interact with faculty in small group sessions, laboratories, conferences and reviews. Approximately 50% of scheduled hours are with faculty in team-oriented sessions that emphasize applications and deeper understanding of content. In addition, all course directors are available to meet with students individually or in small informal groups, and also answer student queries electronically.

Drexel has always made an extraordinary commitment to medical education. We have dedicated educator faculty who lead our courses, disciplines and special programs. These faculty members have a commitment to medical education and most importantly to our students.

Together with our students we form a community of learning and collaboration that permeates every aspect of the culture here at Drexel University College of Medicine. Faculty are here to help you, be a resource and be readily accessible to your learning needs.

Is Drexel University College of Medicine a 'competitive' environment?

In medical school, you are surrounded by other 'stars' and your personal performance can influence what your future specialty might be. We promote your being competitive only with yourself; be the best you can be while maintaining balance in other areas of your life. Our culture supports how medicine is practiced—in a team-centered environment. In a team, if we are going to have good health outcomes for patients, we need skills in collaboration, teamwork and leadership. These skills are built into the curriculum. Will you work hard at Drexel University College of Medicine? Yes. Will you be in an environment of other high performers like you? Yes. Will it be toxic and unsafe? No, we are an environment where members strive hard, contribute greatly and have fun in a supportive space that cultivates your personal and professional development.



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How is the curriculum organized on a weekly basis?

The curriculum is a combination of independent and active learning. Applications and synthesis of content in a team-learning environment are emphasized. The week starts with the delivery of several hours of independent learning content, which is assigned to students by faculty. This content can be in the form of tutorials, written handouts and pre-recorded videos prepared by the faculty, and can include basic and clinical science content. This introductory material will prepare you for the Case-Based Learning session where you and your small group, with faculty guidance, will work through a clinical scenario.

You will practice clinical reasoning skills in this weekly session, and the case will expose the important concepts that you will learn about that week in your basic and clinical science courses. The remainder of the week is a combination of additional faculty-assigned independent learning modules that you do on your own and in-class applications that you work through in a team setting with the help of faculty experts. There is built in time during every week to study and synthesize content.

How does the curriculum help me?

Time limitations are a common issue for busy medical students. We addressed this by creating a format that gives students much more flexibility to manage their day and have time for other activities. Doing what you need to do, when it works best for you, is at the heart of these innovations. For example, the Independent Learning modules are available and can be viewed when it's most convenient for each student, 8 a.m. or midnight depending on your best learning time.

By opening up your daytime hours, you can be available to shadow physicians and clinical practices, which will help you explore career interests. You can also more easily participate in community service or work on scholarly projects. This structure also supports the balance and wellness important to a future physician—being able to work out and enjoy other physical activities or life skills as they balance incorporating new knowledge through their studies.

What is the format of exams?

There will be weekly checkpoint quizzes; answers with explanations are provided once you complete the quiz. Major exams are integrated and use predominately multiple choice format using USMLE board format-style questions and given every three to four weeks. This allows you to learn how to address these types of questions well before you will sit for the licensure exams. Laboratory-based components will have practical exams, and clinical skills will be assessed through standardized patients and other specialized formats. Each course will have a portion of the grade that comes from activities/assignments other than exams, such as oral presentations, papers and projects.

Will I have time to study for Step 1?

There is a dedicated six to seven week study time for Step 1 preparation following the end of year 2 in mid-February. Thread Leaders provide optional review materials. Beyond this, the school provides two NBME basic science comprehensive exams for each student to take during the study period to gauge readiness for USMLE Step 1. In addition, our Student Affairs office provides resources, advice and counseling regarding readiness to take the exam.

Get in touch!

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