



MEDICAL DOCTOR

The study of medicine is different in the U.S. than it is in Cameroon, and can be a difficult field for international students to pursue in the United States. The following link to an article posted on the website for the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions provides a good explanation of medical school admission for international students: www.naahp.org/resources_InternatMed_Article.htm.

Students are first required to earn their four-year Bachelor's degree. Those who are interested in medical school can study any subject—not just biology, chemistry, or physics, though most do—and follow a pre-medicine concentration. This concentration, also simply known as “pre-med,” is a set of courses that students should take before applying to medical school—typically natural sciences, mathematics, and English. Most U.S. universities have a Pre-Med Advisor who guides students through the medical school application process. Because admission to medical school is extremely competitive, students should aim for a very strong undergraduate college or university.

During the final year of his undergraduate studies, the student will take the MCAT – Medical College Admission Test. It is a very difficult test, and requires months of preparation. Only after completing a four-year Bachelor's degree and taking the MCAT can a student apply to medical school, which is another four years of study. After completing four years of medical school, students earn an M.D. degree.

To get an idea of how difficult it is for international students to gain admission to U.S. medical schools, the Association of American Medical Colleges (website at <http://www.aamc.org/>) publishes an annual guide to medical schools that includes useful information and statistics on admission requirements. The most recent data shows that slightly less than 1% of medical students in the United States are international students. The admission rate in 2010 was 44.6% for U.S. citizens and 13.2% for internationals.

Because medical schools, particularly public medical schools, are funded largely by taxes raised in the states in which they are located, admission preference is usually given to residents of that state. Additionally, some state-supported schools will only consider U.S. citizens and permanent residents for admission.

Essentially, an international student has a better chance at eventually receiving admission to a U.S. medical school if he/she completes his/her undergraduate education at a U.S. university, but, even then, it is very difficult to obtain admission. The Association of American Medical Colleges

What do international students who want to study medicine in the U.S. normally do? International students typically complete their medical training and earn their degree in their home country. Then they continue their medical education at the postgraduate level in the U.S., completing a period of clinical training in a specialty field. This is usually called a residency. International students who want to do their residency in the U.S. must pass a certification program administered by the Education Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) (<http://www.ecfm.org/>). While the ECFMG exams are difficult and expensive, and it is still competitive to gain entry into a residency program, pursuing a residency program is not nearly as difficult as gaining admission into a U.S. medical school. There are many more international students in residency programs than in medical school.

If you have any questions about studying the U.S., please contact the educationUSA Advisor at yaoundeEDU@state.gov. Also visit http://yaounde.usembassy.gov/educational_advising.html for information on and to register for upcoming programs.