

MD PROGRAM

Core Curriculum and Competencies

The central curriculum and the two parallel tracks share numerous curricular elements, the result of deliberate educational program design that ensures comparability. At the core, they share the same vision, core curriculum, four-phase curriculum framework and the same graduation and education program competencies.

MD Program Vision

To guide the development of a humanistic, systems-ready physician who is adaptive, critical thinking, collaborative and scholarly.

Core Curriculum

The core curriculum, defined by the Committee on Undergraduate Medical Education (CUMED) is built on a four-pillar framework of 1) Biomedical Sciences, 2) Health Humanities, 3) Clinical Sciences, and 4) Health Systems Sciences.

Four-Phase Curriculum Framework

The central curriculum and the two parallel curricula are designed around a four-phase framework:

- **Phase I - Foundations:** Students in Penn State College of Medicine, whether in the Hershey central curriculum (HC), the 3+ parallel track at Hershey (HC3+) or the University Park curriculum parallel track (UPC) engage in two common instructional formats – small group problem-based learning and direct patient experiences – with variations on the intensity with which each is used. For both HC and HC3+ lectures supplement the instructional formats. At UPC, which is a “no lecture” track, the more extensive small group problem-based learning sessions, which are referred to as Inquiry groups (IQ), and science seminars serve as the instructional formats that subsume the content expectations typically delivered in lectures. Students in HC/HC3+ take the foundational courses sequentially prior to clerkships. Students in UPC take some foundational courses before and some after clerkships.
- **Phase II - Clinical Core:** Student all complete the same eight core clerkships, though the instructional format may be blocks or longitudinal. All students must take USMLE Step 1 before progressing to Phases III/IV.
- **Phase III/IV - Discovery & Residency Prep:** Two required courses – Translating Health Systems Science to the Clinical Setting and Profession of Medicine III (Transition to Residency) are common for all students. Additionally, all students must complete two acting internships, a Humanities selective, and electives to enhance their-competency-directed progression in learning, professional identity formation and residency preparation.

The phases intersect and transitions are flexible, depending on the curriculum option.

Core Competencies

The 10 core competencies for Penn State College of Medicine are:

1. Patient care
2. Knowledge for practice
3. Practice-based learning and improvement
4. Interpersonal and communication skills
5. Professionalism
6. Systems-based practice
7. Inter-professional collaboration
8. Personal and professional development
9. Medical humanities
10. Critical thinking

The central Hershey Curriculum and the two parallel curricula share, in addition, the following:

- Governed by the same curriculum committee (CUMED)
- Participate in the same course and clerkship directors' subcommittees of CUMED
- Report to the same Vice Dean for Educational Affairs
- Grades reported through a single individual
- Use the same curriculum management system
- Use the same student assessment system
- Use the same standardized approach to formative feedback
- Use the same mid-rotation feedback forms
- Use the same school-wide policies on mistreatment and respect in the learning environment
- Use the same criteria for grades in courses and clerkships
- Have the same clerkship requirements, NBME shelf exams and methods of grade calculations
- Use the same evaluation system for end of course and clerkship student feedback
- Require the Medical Student Research Project (MSR) for all students