The M.D./Ph.D. dual career is busy, challenging, and rewarding, and it offers opportunities to do good for many people by advancing knowledge, developing new treatments for diseases, and pushing back the boundaries of the unknown.

How do I know if a combined program is right for me?
M.D./Ph.D programs are specifically designed for those who want to become research physicians, also known as physician-scientists. Graduates of M.D./Ph.D. programs often go on to become faculty members at medical schools, universities, and research institutes such as the National Institutes of Health. M.D./Ph.D candidates are being prepared for careers in which they will spend most of their time doing research in addition to caring for patients. It is critical that applicants have a passion for doing both — most M.D./Ph.D. graduates feel strongly that they would not be fulfilled by only pursuing medicine or only pursuing science.

When and where do I apply?
Nearly all M.D./Ph.D. programs participate in the application process via the American Medical College Application Service® (AMCAS®). On the AMCAS application, students designate themselves as M.D./Ph.D. applicants and complete two additional essays: one related to why they are interested in M.D./Ph.D. training, and the other highlighting their significant research experiences.

What schools offer this type of program?
Nationwide, there are more than 100 M.D./Ph.D. programs affiliated with medical schools. The National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) supported Medical Scientist Training Programs or MSTPs, currently provides training grants that partially support 40 M.D./Ph.D. programs at 45 degree-granting institutions. M.D./Ph.D. degrees, in the Medical School Admission Requirements website profiles under “Combined Degrees and Special Programs.”

How long does it take?
Students enter an integrated curriculum that typically takes seven to eight years to complete. During this time they satisfy the full requirements for both the M.D. and the Ph.D. degrees.

What kind of work can I do? How much time is spent as an M.D.? As a researcher?
According to a recent study of M.D./Ph.D. programs, about 75 percent of U.S. M.D./Ph.D. graduates are in academic medicine or pharmaceutical company positions that make use of their interests in both patient care and research. M.D./Ph.D. physician-scientists are typically faculty members at academic medical centers who spend 70 percent to 80 percent of their time conducting research, though this can vary by specialty. Their research may be lab-based, translational, or clinical. The remaining time is often divided between clinical service, teaching, and administrative activities.

M.D./Ph.D. APPLICATION TIMELINE
AMCAS application opens: May preceding the year of expected entry
Applicants interviewed: October–March
Final decisions sent to applicants: December–March
Applicants revisit program(s) to decide where to matriculate: March–April
M.D. /Ph.D. programs start: June–August

MORE INFORMATION
More information about M.D./Ph.D. programs: www.aamc.org/mdphd
A list of M.D./Ph.D. degree programs offered in the United States and Canada: www.aamc.org/students/research/mdphd/applying_md-phd/61570/mdphd_programs.html
Medical School Admission Requirements: www.aamc.org/msar