



# DOCTOR OF CHIROPRACTIC MEDICINE

## CAREER GUIDE

The *Standard of Excellence* in Integrative Medicine



# Introduction to the Guide

We created this guide for those of you who are considering pursuing a Doctor of Chiropractic (DC) degree. Aspiring chiropractic physicians have a lot to think about and learn before they decide if, when and where to pursue such a degree. This guide was created to bring you real insight into exploring an exciting career as a chiropractic physician and is divided into three main sections:

## **PART I:**

**UNDERSTANDING THE CHIROPRACTIC MEDICINE CAREER AND INDUSTRY**

## **PART II:**

**COMPARING SCHOOLS AND SELECTING A PROGRAM**

## **PART III:**

**NAVIGATING THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS**



# THE STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

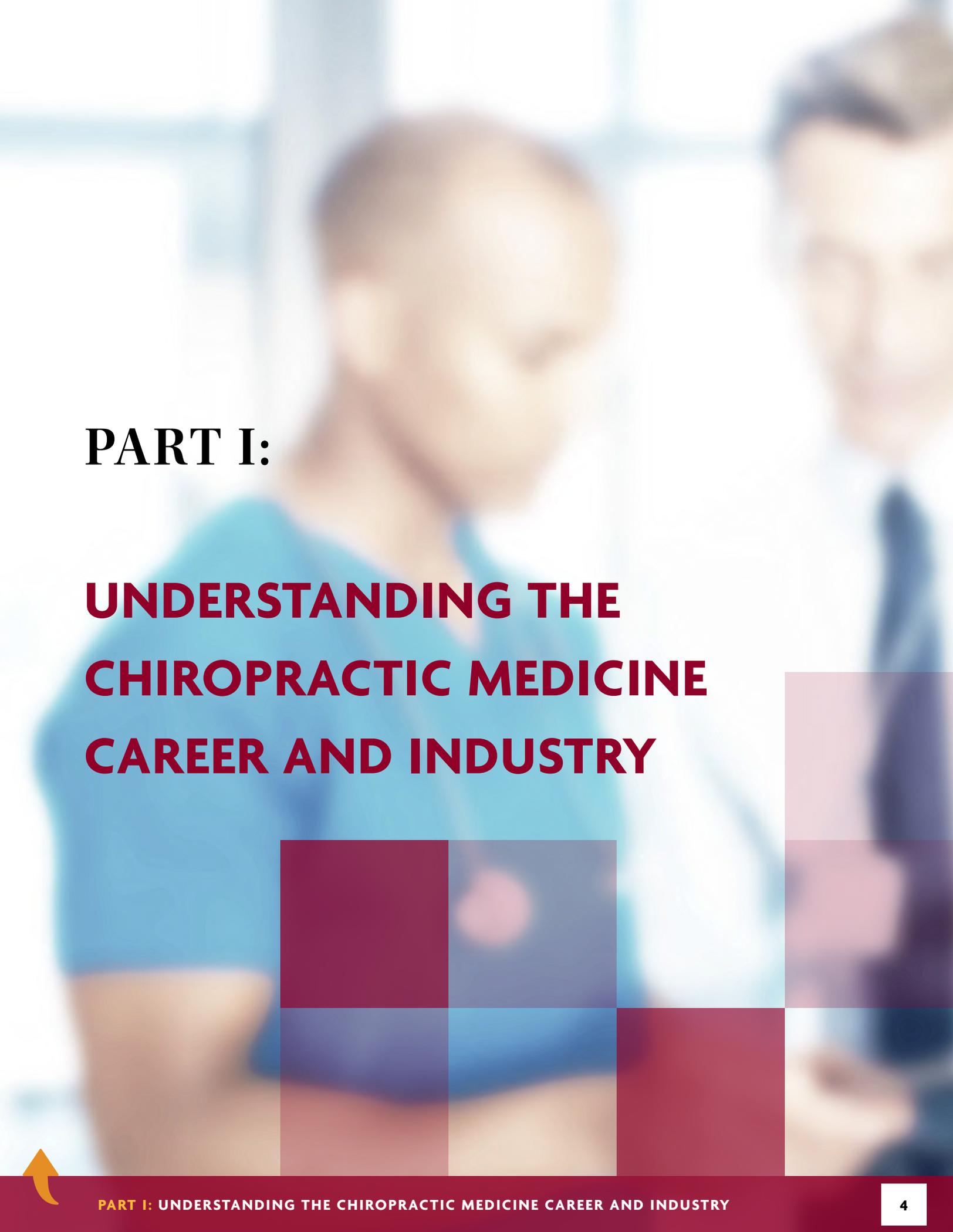
*in Integrative Health Care*

## About National University of Health Sciences

Founded in 1906, National University of Health Sciences (NUHS) is a leader in the field of integrative medicine and is respected worldwide for success in balancing healing arts and science and combining broad-scope integrative medicine with patient-centered care.

NUHS is an established champion of high admission standards, accreditation and academic excellence for its professions. That's why students from across the globe choose NUHS to pursue higher education in health care.





# **PART I:**

# **UNDERSTANDING THE CHIROPRACTIC MEDICINE CAREER AND INDUSTRY**

# Introduction to the Chiropractic Medical Field

## WHAT DOES A CHIROPRACTIC PHYSICIAN ACTUALLY DO?

A chiropractic physician, or a doctor of chiropractic (DC), specializes in natural, non-invasive health care, and is trained to diagnose, treat and manage a full range of patient conditions. DCs consider the various factors that affect human health, including: biomechanical dysfunction, trauma, hygiene, stress, emotion, nutrition, exercise, posture and more.

A DC performs adjustments or physical manipulation to the spine and other joints, but might also perform acupuncture, lifestyle and nutritional interventions, rehabilitation therapy and diagnostic tests like X-ray, ultrasound and blood pressure analysis.





## HOW DO DC'S PRACTICE?

### Chiropractic physicians are able to:



Treat patients effectively with a wide variety of healing skills.



Practice as a primary-care (first contact) physician in most states.



Run their own business or work as an associate in a group or integrative practice.



Specialize in fields such as sports medicine, acupuncture, pediatrics, women's health, neurology and more.



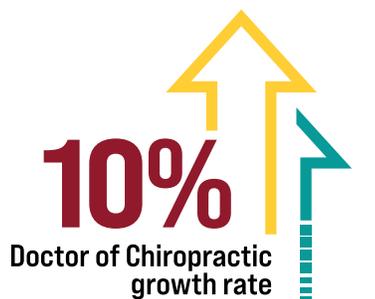
Become licensed in all 50 states. Those seeking licensure as a DC must take national board examinations, as well as apply for licensure in the state where they plan to practice. The professional organizations representing chiropractic physicians include the **AMERICAN CHIROPRACTIC ASSOCIATION (ACA)** and the **WORLD FEDERATION OF CHIROPRACTIC (WFC)**.



# What is the career outlook over the next 5-10 years?

## A LOOK AT THE INDUSTRY'S STATISTICS

### STRONG JOB GROWTH



Employment of doctors of chiropractic is projected to grow 10 percent from 2022 – 2033, much faster than the 4 percent average for all occupations.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

If you are considering a career in chiropractic medicine, there has never been a better time to invest in an advanced degree in this field. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) also notes the expected growth toward chiropractic medicine.

**Demand is expected to increase for chiropractic services as a nonsurgical drug-free way to treat pain and improve overall wellness.**

As a result, chiropractors are increasingly working with other health care workers such as physicians and physical therapists through referrals and complementary care.

Opportunities for chiropractors also will be created by the continued aging of the large baby-boom generation. Older adults are more likely than younger people to have neuromusculoskeletal and joint problems, and they will continue to seek chiropractic care and other types of treatment for these conditions.

## HEALTH CARE NEEDS AND THE TREND TOWARD INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

At NUHS, we believe in bringing together professionals from a broad range of medical specialties for the benefit of patients and the health care industry as a whole. This makes our graduates ideally suited for the growing number of integrative practice opportunities. Compensation for working in an integrated setting is also more rewarding. **The average annual salary for Doctors of Chiropractic (DCs) in a solo practice is \$89,007; DCs working in an integrated setting<sup>1</sup> earned an average of \$170,000. Those in a multidisciplinary practice<sup>2</sup> earned an annual average salary of \$124,857 and those in a group practice<sup>3</sup> setting averaged \$131,389.**

1. An integrated setting is defined as a practice with both a DC and an MD on staff.
2. A multidisciplinary practice is defined as having a practicing DC and any other complementary medicine practitioner on staff (e.g., acupuncturist, PT, LMT).
3. A group practice is defined as DCs practicing in groups (or partnerships).

### COMPETITIVE COMPENSATION

#### Individual Practice



**\$89,007**

#### Integrated Practice



**\$170,000**

Source: Chiropractic Economics, 28th Annual Salary & Expense Survey, June 2025

## FLEXIBILITY. ENTREPRENEURSHIP. BALANCE.

Studies show the importance of a healthy work-life balance for all, but particularly those in health care professions. A balanced work-life approach has been found to be beneficial not just in terms of overall job satisfaction, but also for achieving the main reason many chiropractic physicians chose the profession in the first place.

In the *2024 Chiropractic Economics Survey*, **more than 400 chiropractors reported seeing patients between 31 and 40 hours per week**, and **EXPLOREHEALTHCAREERS**, confirms the average work week for chiropractors is approximately 40 hours.

The *2023 Medscape Physician Compensation Report*, with results reported in **THE WHITE COAT INVESTOR**, supports this, stating that on average, physicians (MDs, DOs, specialists) worked 50 hours per week, but long shifts were not uncommon for most. While the number of hours worked per week often depends on their specialty, residents can work up to an average of 80 hours per week, with general surgeons working an average of 60.78 hours.

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?** Chiropractic physicians have more opportunity to structure their professional time, affording greater opportunity to achieve work-life balance and achieve sustainable career satisfaction.

**Additionally, DCs enjoy a highly in-demand career field and a variety of employment options.**

### POPULAR TREATMENT CHOICE



Chiropractic is an in-demand field! It is estimated that chiropractors treat more than **35 million Americans (adults and children) annually**.

Source: American Chiropractic Association

### IN-DEMAND FIELD



About **3,100 openings for chiropractors are projected each year**, on average, over the decade. Many of these openings are expected to result from increased demand, and the need to replace practitioners who exit the labor force, such as retirees.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

## VARIETY OF EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

### Careers Pursued by DCs:

- ▶ **50% SOLO PRACTICE**
- ▶ **23% GROUP PRACTITIONER/PARTNER**
- ▶ **12% ASSOCIATE**
- ▶ **3% FRANCHISE OWNER**

Source: Chiropractic Economics, 27th Annual Salary & Expense Survey, May 2024



## WHY NUHS STUDENTS CHOOSE CHIROPRACTIC MEDICINE

Students have many reasons for pursuing a chiropractic medicine program. Here are a few statements from NUHS students explaining their reasons for becoming chiropractic physicians. You can read about other students' journeys by following their [WEEKLY BLOGS](#) on the NUHS website.



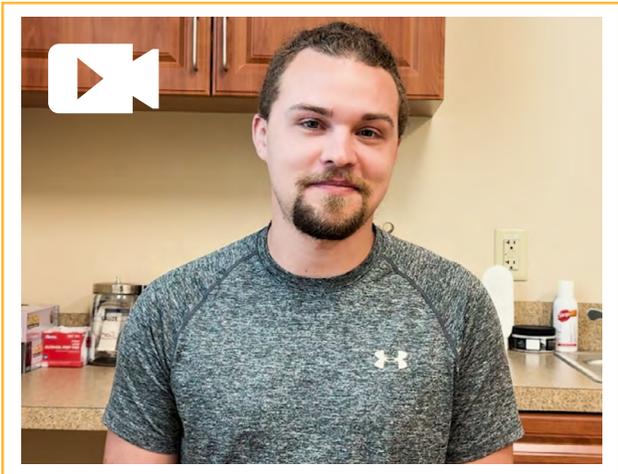
**GINA MONNOT**

DOCTOR OF CHIROPRACTIC STUDENT –  
ILLINOIS CAMPUS



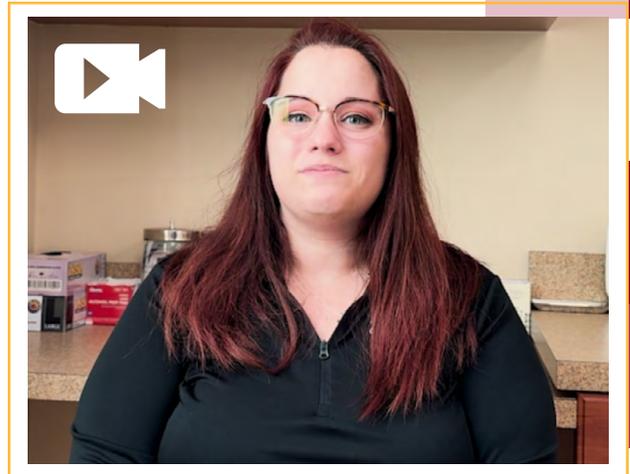
**BRYCEN VALIGA**

DOCTOR OF CHIROPRACTIC STUDENT –  
ILLINOIS CAMPUS



**MAX SHIVER**

DOCTOR OF CHIROPRACTIC STUDENT –  
FLORIDA SITE



**ARIANNA TSENGOURAS**

DOCTOR OF CHIROPRACTIC STUDENT –  
FLORIDA SITE

# What are the traits of a successful DC?



## PASSION FOR HELPING OTHERS

Generally, DCs spend more time with their patients than MDs in order to get at the root cause of health problems. This requires you to have a genuine interest in and compassion for others.



## APTITUDE FOR SCIENCE

A curious mind and an interest in problem-solving will help you succeed in a chiropractic medical school program. It will also give you the diagnostic skills you need to serve your patients well.



## EXCELLENT WORK ETHIC

You must be willing to do the work required for a rigorous medical school program. Time management and study skills will serve you well as a chiropractic student and later as a chiropractic physician.



## EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

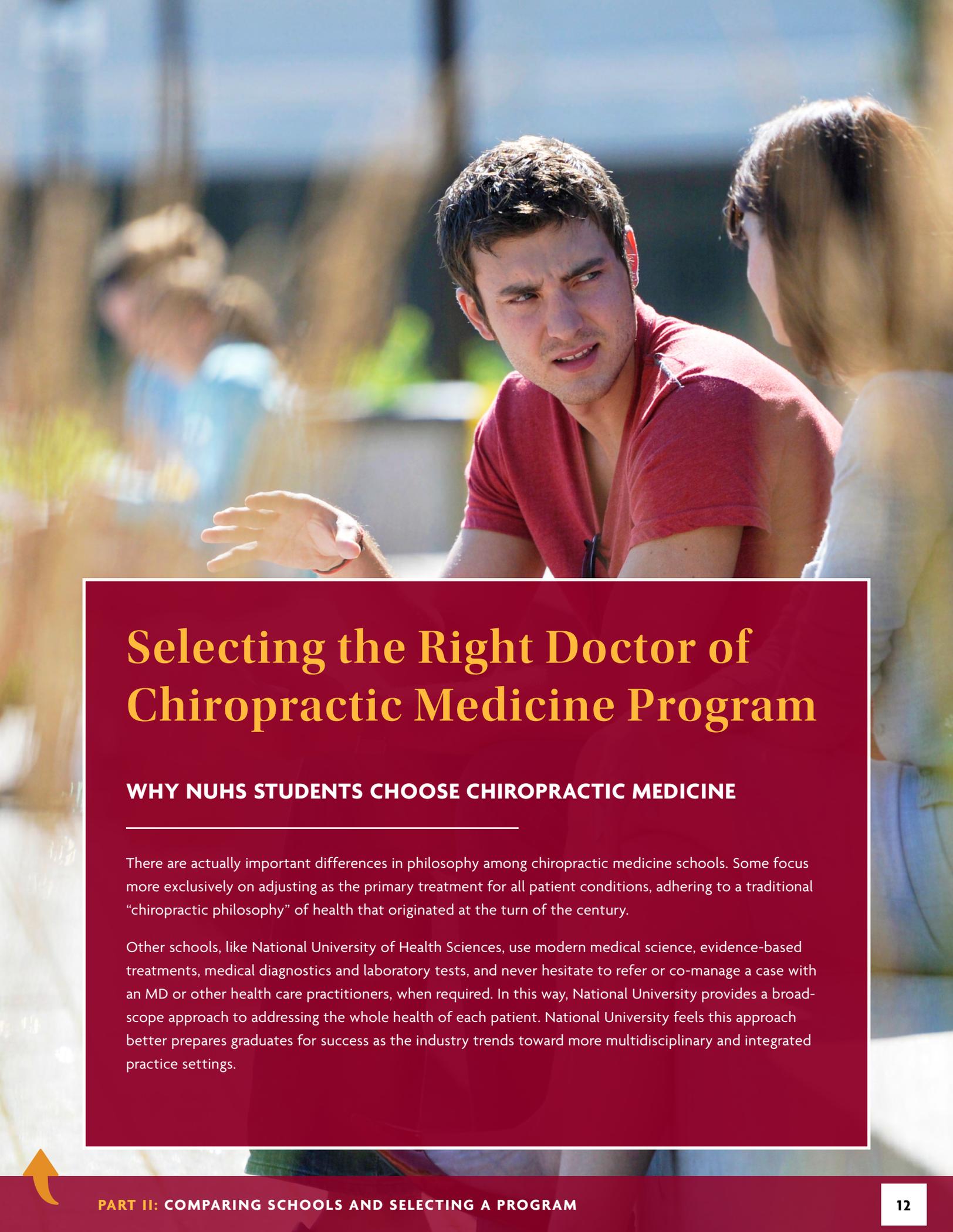
Fifty percent of DCs work in a solo practice setting; 23% as a group practitioner or partner; 12% as an associate and 3% as a franchise owner.



# PART II:

## COMPARING SCHOOLS AND SELECTING A PROGRAM



A young man with dark hair, wearing a red t-shirt, is leaning forward and gesturing with his right hand while talking to a woman with long brown hair. They are outdoors in a bright, sunny setting. In the background, another person is visible but out of focus.

# Selecting the Right Doctor of Chiropractic Medicine Program

## WHY NUHS STUDENTS CHOOSE CHIROPRACTIC MEDICINE

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There are actually important differences in philosophy among chiropractic medicine schools. Some focus more exclusively on adjusting as the primary treatment for all patient conditions, adhering to a traditional “chiropractic philosophy” of health that originated at the turn of the century.

Other schools, like National University of Health Sciences, use modern medical science, evidence-based treatments, medical diagnostics and laboratory tests, and never hesitate to refer or co-manage a case with an MD or other health care practitioners, when required. In this way, National University provides a broad-scope approach to addressing the whole health of each patient. National University feels this approach better prepares graduates for success as the industry trends toward more multidisciplinary and integrated practice settings.

# Questions to ask before making your decision.

Selecting a school for your Doctor of Chiropractic Medicine program can be challenging. You should start by asking important questions like the ones listed below:

## Q Which school will best prepare you for the future of health care?

### **INTEGRATION:**

With a growing interest in multidisciplinary and integrated practice settings, it is important to look for a school that prepares you for that future. This means a program where DCs train to work in cooperation with other health professionals, such as MDs, DOs, NDs and others.

### **PRIMARY CARE:**

Look for a school that prepares you as a primary care physician. Most states define a chiropractor as a primary care physician, meaning you are able to serve as a patient's first contact in the health care system, can diagnose and manage the full range of patient conditions and refer and co-manage cases with physicians in other medical specialties.





## WHAT WE OFFER:

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NUHS prepares graduates for the future of health care by offering a campus dedicated to integrative medicine. You'll study and work side-by-side with students and faculty from its naturopathic medicine, and acupuncture and herbal medicine programs. This experience prepares you to understand and speak with a wider range of medical professionals when you graduate. In turn, you'll be able to establish strong referral networks with other physicians, and gain respect in the medical community. Most of all, you'll be able to provide better advice and care for your future patients.



## Which school offers the most beneficial opportunities for clinical training?

### **GEOGRAPHY:**

Consider a school located in a thriving health care job market, which results in greater employment opportunities after graduation. Look for hospitals, veterans' clinics, libraries, science and health industries nearby, as well as convenient transportation (airports, trains, buses).

### **CLINIC OPPORTUNITIES:**

Consider the clinical phase of the program. You should spend a full year treating actual patients under the supervision of clinical faculty, learning how to keep and read medical records and gain the confidence and skills to succeed when you start your own practice.

## WHAT WE OFFER:

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NUHS offers DC programs in either suburban Chicago or the Tampa Bay area of Florida. You have a broad range of options as an intern from our university clinics to rotations in hospitals veterans' facilities or community health clinics.



## Which school provides the most comprehensive medical school education?

### **BASIC SCIENCES:**

Review the basic science curriculum. As with any good medical education, the program should include a strong emphasis in basic sciences, with rigorous coursework in anatomy, biochemistry, pathology and more.

### **CLINICAL SCIENCES:**

Review the clinical science coursework and practical training in the program. This part of a DC degree teaches students important skills in diagnosing patient conditions, performing physical exams, and utilizing chiropractic medicine techniques, physical rehabilitation and diagnostic imaging. Students learn through practical training how to build successful doctor-patient relationships.

### **WHAT WE OFFER:**

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At NUHS, your basic science coursework will be similar to that of a typical MD student, including one year of hands-on human cadaver dissection in our gross anatomy laboratory. Our clinical sciences will have you practicing adjustment and examination skills in your first six months, with a heavy emphasis on thorough diagnostic skills.





# Q

## Which integrative medicine school provides students in-demand career opportunities in three key areas of specialization?

DC students at NUHS choosing an area of concentration must successfully complete three elective courses (2.0 credits each, for a total of 6.0 credit hours). Taking concentration electives in trimesters 7-9 is required; no courses are to be taken in the 10th trimester.

Concentration electives are all online, asynchronous and can be taken in any order. The following concentration elective courses will count toward fulfilling the elective requirements for graduation:

### **SPORTS MEDICINE CONCENTRATION**

- EL6700: Application of Diversified Technique
- EL6712: Exercise Testing and Prescription
- EL6713: Nutrition for Human Performance
- EL6714: Sports Injuries & Medical Conditions

### **FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE CONCENTRATION**

- EL6723: Laboratory Interpretation for Functional Medicine
- EL6724: Functional Medicine and Chronic Illness
- EL6725: Functional Neuroendocrinology and Reproductive Health

### **WOMEN'S HEALTH CONCENTRATION**

- EL6733: Functional Neuroendocrinology and Reproductive Health
- EL6734: Women's Health and Conservative Management I
- EL6735: Women's Health and Conservative Management II

## **WHAT WE OFFER:**

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National University offers three concentrations in the Doctor of Chiropractic Medicine program: **Sports Medicine**, **Functional Medicine** and **Women's Health**. These optional concentrations are integrated into the curriculum without additional time or cost, allowing students to specialize in their areas of interest.

# Q

## Which school delivers the most in-depth chiropractic adjustment/technique instruction?

### EVIDENCE-BASED:

Understand the technique instruction, to be sure that the chiropractic adjustments taught are backed by research proving their effectiveness. Look for a school that offers evidence-based instruction and technique.

### HANDS-ON:

Understand how chiropractic techniques are taught. Some chiropractic schools have you simply watch an instructor adjust for a long period of time, teaching you only how to “set-up” your hands for the technique. You might not actually get to perform an adjustment on your own until far into your training. Instead, look for a school that allows you to practice complete hands-on adjustments in class, under supervision, in your first year of school.

### WHAT WE OFFER:

DC students at NUHS learn more than 100 scientifically proven adjustments, and master them with hours of hands-on practice. At NUHS, you'll start practicing adjustments under expert supervision within six months of starting your program.





# Q

## Which school supports your success?

### **TUTORING AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT:**

Check if the professors teach classes directly or use assistants. Ask if the school offers free peer tutoring (where senior students provide help in specific topics).

### **BUSINESS CLASSES:**

Discover what business classes are included in the curriculum. When you graduate, you'll most likely be starting your own business, and you'll also need to understand insurance, billing, marketing and business management procedures. Be sure the school you select offers classes that give you these skills for practicing physicians, as well as DC students. Does the institution offer an opportunity to enroll in dual-degrees or multiple programs so that you can earn more credentials with less time and money?

### **ADDITIONAL EDUCATION:**

Consider what extra courses are available to students on the weekend or online, that could augment your primary degree. Is continuing education reserved primarily for practicing physicians, or is it also available to DC students? Does the institution offer an opportunity to enroll in dual-degrees or multiple programs so that you can earn more credentials with less time and money?

### **STRONG ALUMNI NETWORK:**

Look for a school where alumni are involved, communicate with each other and current students, and where you can reach out to them for mentoring and career support.

### **ACCREDITATION:**

The Doctor of Chiropractic degree program is accredited at both the Illinois and the Florida site by The Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE): 9393 N. 90th St., Suite 102-660, Scottsdale, AZ 85258-5073; 480-443-8877; [www.cce-usa.org](http://www.cce-usa.org). The Doctor of Chiropractic degree program at the Florida site on the St. Petersburg College (SPC) campus is also licensed by The Commission for Independent Education, Florida Department of Education, 325 W. Gaines St., Suite 1414, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400; 850-245-3200.

## WHAT WE OFFER:

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In addition to opportunities to earn multiple degrees on one campus, National University offers an array of student support services that contribute to a successful educational experience.

These include academic advising, peer tutoring, flexible tracks, various student clubs and more. Business classes designed to help you build, market and manage your practice are included in the curriculum, often with industry experts as guest speakers. NUHS has an excellent post-graduate department where students are welcome and encouraged to take additional courses that provide specialty skills for future practice. Finally, National University has an engaged alumni network who make themselves available to provide current support, mentoring, shadowing experiences and more.





## **PART III:**

# **NAVIGATING THE ADMISSION PROCESS**



# Next Step: Understanding Admission Requirements

## GPA AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

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Here is what chiropractic schools will expect from you when you apply for admission:

- ▶ **3.0 MINIMUM GPA** (or 2.75 under the Alternative Admission Track Plan)
- ▶ **90 HOURS OF UNDERGRADUATE COURSEWORK OR A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE**
- ▶ **SCIENCE PREREQUISITES, INCLUDING LAB-BASED COURSEWORK IN BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY AND PHYSICS**
- ▶ **NON-SCIENCE PREREQUISITES, INCLUDING COURSEWORK IN ENGLISH, PSYCHOLOGY, SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES** (Not required for NUHS)

## TIPS ON ADMISSION

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### What undergraduate degree is required?

A science major such as biology or chemistry is the best preparation, since chiropractic schools require you to have completed a certain amount of science credits, including laboratory sciences. Many undergraduate schools have “pre-health profession” or “pre-chiropractic” tracks. Don’t worry, even if you don’t have a science major, you can complete the necessary science prerequisites prior to admission.

National University offers a wide selection of undergraduate science courses right on campus in our **PREREQUISITE PROGRAM**. Some DC students begin at NUHS in that program in order to complete missing science coursework.

### When should I apply?

Most chiropractic schools have a rolling admissions calendar, meaning they accept applications year-round.

At National University, new classes start September, January and May of each year! You’ll want to start the application process six months to one year before you intend to start your DC program. This will allow ample time for all admission requirements to be completed, and ensure that there are still spots left in the program.

**APPLY EARLY!**

## What will make me a more competitive applicant?

You can make yourself more attractive to admissions officials at chiropractic schools by doing well in science course prerequisites and showing your interest and commitment to the field. You can demonstrate this by having a “shadow experience” – spending time in a chiropractor’s office in order to understand whether or not this is the right career for you. National University offers “shadow experiences” before or after you apply with a network of practicing graduates nationwide.

It is also important to select undergraduate classes that will make you more prepared when you begin your advanced degree. Review our [SUGGESTED COURSE OUTLINES](#) to understand the courses you should be taking at your undergraduate institution that will satisfy our prerequisite requirements.

## What if I don’t have all the prerequisite courses or requirements?

Even if you think you don’t have everything needed to apply to a chiropractic school, call an admissions counselor to consider your options. They may be able to help!

At National University, students without [PREREQUISITE SCIENCE COURSES](#) may be able to complete them through the school’s undergraduate courses right on campus. You also may qualify for an Alternative Admissions Track Plan if your GPA isn’t quite 3.0. This provides an opportunity to work more closely with an academic advisor to help ensure you can perform well in a rigorous program.



## What documents will be required?

Most chiropractic medicine schools will require the following documents:

- ▶ **APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION**
- ▶ **APPLICATION FEE AND DEPOSIT**
- ▶ **ESSAY QUESTION RESPONSES**
- ▶ **CHARACTER REFERENCES**
- ▶ **UNDERGRADUATE TRANSCRIPTS**

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**NOTE:** MOST WILL NOT REQUIRE THE FOLLOWING:

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- ▶ **STANDARDIZED TESTS (E.G. MCAT, GRE)**
- ▶ **ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEW**

NUHS provides a quick summary of the **ADMISSION ESSENTIALS** on its website.

## Visit Options

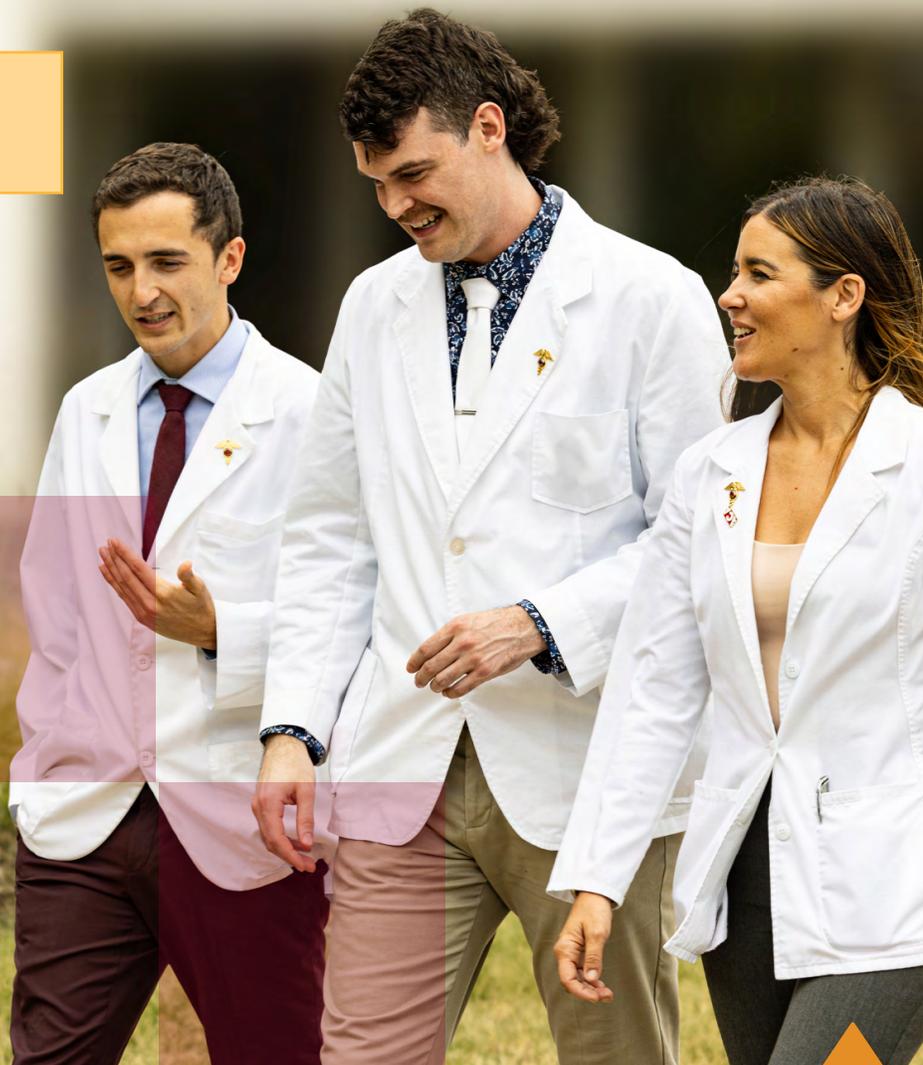
The best way to decide whether or not the college you are interested in is the right place for you is to attend a visit event! Learn about [ALL OF OUR VISIT EVENTS HERE](#) and receive a tuition credit for attending! We offer a variety of in-person and online events and experiences.

## Financial Options

Like any professional medical degree, training to be a chiropractic physician is a big investment. Normally, chiropractic students rely on some type of financial aid in the form of scholarships or loans. For a DC degree, students normally qualify for both federal direct and private loans. Many schools offer a variety of institutional scholarships, so be sure to ask. The NUHS website includes a breakdown of [COST ESTIMATES](#) for its Doctor of Chiropractic degree program.

Not sure where to begin or what to do next? Read more about the financial aid process on the NUHS website. Regarding the types of aid you may receive for your education plan, research the available loan programs, scholarships and federal work-study programs.

### FINANCIAL AID



# Why Should You Choose the DC Program at NUHS?

**UNCOMPROMISING RIGOR – WHY NATIONAL UNIVERSITY?**

**WATCH VIDEO**

**YOUR NEXT STEP TO SUCCESS!** NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES OFFERS THE DOCTOR OF CHIROPRACTIC DEGREE, AND IS A GREAT PLACE TO START YOUR COMPARISON OF SCHOOLS.

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES**





## OUR ACADEMIC SUPERIORITY

National University's chiropractic medicine program is rigorous, uncompromising and built on a solid foundation in the basic sciences. We maintain the highest admission standards for our students. For example, NUHS is one of the accredited schools that has a chiropractic degree program requiring a bachelor's degree for admission. Students in the naturopathic medicine program are also required to have a baccalaureate degree. As a result, NUHS graduates often become leaders in their professions, and credit National University as the reason for their confidence and success.



## OUR DEDICATION TO INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

National University prepares graduates for the future of health care by offering a campus dedicated to integrative medicine. In fact, you'll study and work side-by-side with students and faculty from its naturopathic medicine, and acupuncture and herbal medicine programs. As a result, you will be better prepared to work and thrive in today's integrated health care market.



## OUR HISTORY OF LEADERSHIP

Founded in 1906, National University has more than 115 years of experience in graduating leaders in the chiropractic profession. A driving force for moving natural health care into mainstream medicine, we were the first to offer hospital experience to chiropractic students, push for national accreditation of chiropractic colleges and publish medically-indexed and peer-reviewed scientific journals.





WE HOPE THAT THIS GUIDE WAS HELPFUL AS YOU DECIDE TO PURSUE A DOCTOR OF CHIROPRACTIC DEGREE. PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO REACH OUT TO US IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS OR THE NUHS STUDENT EXPERIENCE.

CALL THE OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS AT 1-800-826-6285  
OR EMAIL US AT [ADMISSIONS@NUHS.EDU](mailto:ADMISSIONS@NUHS.EDU).



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