

Graduates of Accelerated MD Programs: A Five-Year Look at the National Landscape

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Background

Accelerated-MD (ACC-MD) degree programs, which take three years to complete instead of the typical duration of four years, have historically been offered at few medical schools in the U.S. and Canada. In the current medical education era, interest in ACC-MD programs in the U.S. has steadily increased since the creation of the Consortium of Accelerated Medical Pathway Programs (CAMPP) in 2015.¹ With a Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation grant to NYU Grossman School of Medicine, CAMPP was created by a group of medical educators at eight schools with a shared interest in ACC-MD programs; over 30 schools are now part of the consortium.¹

All ACC-MD programs offered at U.S. medical schools similarly aim to shorten the typical four-year duration of the MD program. ACC-MD programs must meet all Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME®) accreditation standards for MD programs (including at least 130 weeks of instruction).^{2,3} To deliver the MD curriculum over a three-year period, ACC-MD programs substantially decrease vacation time and time blocks for unstructured or elective curricula: The vacation time that typically occurs between the first and second year of medical school is often replaced with curricular activities, and the first academic year may start early.^{2,4} At some schools, students enter the ACC-MD program at matriculation. At most schools, interested students who are enrolled in the nonaccelerated MD program must apply and be selected to enroll in the ACC-MD program. At one recently founded medical school, all students in a given class are enrolled in the ACC-MD program. Other aspects of ACC-MD programs vary widely among schools on a program-specific basis; as two examples, many of them offer directed pathways for students who complete the ACC-MD program to enter graduate medical education (GME) at a residency program affiliated with the medical school, and numerous ACC-MD programs focus on preparing students to enter GME in specific primary care specialties (e.g., family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics).^{2,4}

About the Data Collection

In April 2020, the AAMC added an indicator for ACC-MD programs to the list of degree-program enrollment options within its Student Records System (SRS). This indicator was added to facilitate data collection about ACC-MD programs and participating students at a national level. With the addition of this indicator to the SRS, medical school registrars select from the following list of mutually exclusive program types for each student at the time of matriculation, while enrolled in medical school, and at graduation:

- MD Program
- Accelerated MD Program
- Combined BA-MD
- Combined BS-MD
- Combined MD-PhD
- Combined MD-MBA
- Combined MD-MPH
- Combined MA-MD
- Combined MS-MD
- Combined MD-JD
- Combined MD-MPA
- Combined MD-Other
- Combined MD-Dental (OMS [oral and maxillofacial surgery])

For this data snapshot, SRS individual-level records for degree programs at graduation and medical schools of graduation were examined for all graduates of U.S. MD-granting schools in 2020-21 through 2024-25.

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Key Findings

Over the past five years, ACC-MD graduates comprised nearly 1% of all graduates of U.S. MD-granting medical schools (Table 1).

Over the past five years, about 89% of all graduates of U.S. MD-granting medical schools were MD graduates. MD-PhD graduates and bachelor’s-MD graduates each comprised about 3% of all graduates annually, MD-MPH graduates comprised about 2% of all graduates annually, and those in each of the remaining program types comprised about 1% or less of all graduates annually. Compared to 2020-21, the number of graduates in 2024-25 had increased for four of the nine types of programs shown (i.e., MD, MD-MPH, master’s-MD, and ACC-MD). The number of graduates for each of the remaining types of degree programs had remained unchanged or decreased in 2024-25, compared to 2020-21.

Table 1. U.S. MD-Granting Medical School Graduates in 2020-21 Through 2024-25, by Degree Program at Graduation

Degree Program in Graduation	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24		2024-25	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
MD	18,668	89.2	18,658	88.6	18,665	89.2	18,570	89.0	19,252	89.1
MD-PhD	666	3.2	667	3.2	646	3.1	608	2.9	650	3.0
Bachelor’s-MD*	608	2.9	707	3.4	599	2.9	535	2.6	545	2.5
MD-MPH	360	1.7	352	1.7	335	1.6	439	2.1	435	2.0
MD-MBA	195	0.9	210	1.0	207	1.0	222	1.1	194	0.9
Master’s-MD†	103	0.5	136	0.6	117	0.6	113	0.5	147	0.7
MD-Dental (OMS)	77	0.4	73	0.3	76	0.4	82	0.4	77	0.4
MD-Other‡	127	0.6	99	0.5	105	0.5	132	0.6	125	0.6
ACC-MD	122	0.6	155	0.7	177	0.8	171	0.8	174	0.8
Total MD Graduates	20,926		21,057		20,927		20,872		21,599	

ACC, accelerated; OMS, oral and maxillofacial surgery.

* The bachelor’s-MD program type includes BA-MD and BS-MD dual degrees. Numerous BA-MD and BS-MD programs shorten the typical eight-year duration of college and medical school to six or seven years.⁵

† The master’s-MD program type includes MA-MD and MS-MD dual degrees.

‡ The MD-Other program type includes MD-JD, MD-MPA, and MD-Other.

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Key Findings

In each of the past five years, approximately 11%-16% of all U.S. MD-granting medical schools reported at least one ACC-MD program graduate (Table 2).

Most schools annually reported graduates for two (i.e., MD and MD-PhD) of nine types of degree programs; less than 50% of schools annually reported graduates for each of the other seven types of degree programs. ACC-MD graduates were reported by about 11%-16% of all medical schools annually; the number of schools that reported ACC-MD graduates increased from 16 in 2020-21 to 24 in 2024-25.

Table 2. Number of U.S. MD-Granting Medical Schools With Graduates, by Degree Program

Degree Program of the Graduates	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24		2024-25	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
MD	145	98.0	150	98.7	152	99.3	153	98.7	153	98.7
MD-PhD	99	66.9	102	67.1	101	66.0	100	64.5	98	63.2
Bachelor's-MD*	37	25.0	39	25.7	42	27.5	31	20.0	33	21.3
MD-MPH	55	37.2	64	42.1	61	39.9	65	41.9	62	40.0
MD-MBA	49	33.1	47	30.9	47	30.7	45	29.0	44	28.4
Master's-MD	30	20.3	34	22.4	33	21.6	32	20.6	36	23.2
MD-Dental (OMS)	30	20.3	31	20.4	29	19.0	32	20.6	32	20.6
MD-Other‡	28	18.9	28	18.4	22	14.4	26	16.8	23	14.8
ACC-MD	16	10.8	16	10.5	18	11.8	24	15.5	24	15.5
Total MD Schools**††	148		152		153		155		155	

ACC, accelerated; OMS, oral and maxillofacial surgery.

* The bachelor's-MD program type includes BA-MD and BS-MD dual degrees.

† The master's-MD program type includes MA-MD and MS-MD dual degrees.

‡ The MD-Other program type includes MD-JD, MD-MPA, and MD-Other.

** The MD-granting school totals are slightly larger than the numbers of schools reporting MD graduates each year because in a given year, one or two schools that reported graduates of the ACC-MD or bachelor's-MD program did not report graduates of the MD program.

†† For all types of degree programs shown, a school may offer a particular type but not report any graduates of that program in a given year.

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Key Findings

Of the schools that annually reported having ACC-MD program graduates, most reported relatively small numbers (Table 3).

In 2020-25, there was a wide range in the number of ACC-MD graduates reported by each school, and most schools reported small numbers of these graduates. The median number of ACC-MD graduates per school (for those schools reporting any in the year shown) ranged annually from four to seven.

Table 3. Number of U.S. Medical Schools With ACC-MD Graduates and Range in Number of ACC-MD Graduates per School

U.S. Medical Schools with ACC-MD Graduates	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24		2024-25	
	N		N		N		N		N	
Number of Schools	16		16		18		24		24	
Median Number of ACC-MD Graduates per school	4		5		7		5		5	
	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max
Range of Number of ACC-MD Graduates per School	1	27	1	29	1	29	1	27	1	37

ACC, accelerated; Max, maximum; Min, minimum.

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Implications for the Future

1. An ACC-MD degree program is one option out of many for students enrolled at U.S. medical schools. Beginning in 2026, AAMC-member medical schools featured in the AAMC Medical School Admission Requirements™ (MSAR®) guide will be able to add information to their profiles about their applicable, three-year ACC-MD programs. This will increase awareness of these programs among potential medical school applicants and facilitate collection of more detailed information about ACC-MD programs at AAMC-member medical schools.
2. An emerging body of scholarship indicates that graduates of ACC-MD programs (many of whom remain at their home institutions for GME) perform similarly to graduates of MD programs during GME.⁶⁻⁸ At schools with both MD and ACC-MD graduates, higher proportions of ACC-MD graduates (compared to MD graduates) have reportedly entered primary care specialties, and ACC-MD graduates have also reported less debt at graduation than those in other programs.⁹ Thus, an ACC-MD program can be a good option for students who are interested in pursuing their undergraduate medical education on an accelerated basis and are appropriately prepared and supported to do so.
3. In the context of projected physician shortages in the U.S., needs for a larger primary care physician workforce, and concerns about debt levels among graduating medical students, more schools may want to consider developing ACC-MD programs or expanding those already established. A carefully designed approach for students to transition from the ACC-MD to the nonaccelerated MD program is essential for any school offering an ACC-MD program²; according to a recently published study, approximately 19% (114/591) of students enrolled in ACC-MD programs at 14 schools switched to nonaccelerated MD programs for a range of reasons.¹⁰
4. Follow-up studies of ACC-MD graduates — through completion of their GME and entry into the practicing physician workforce — can help further define the role for ACC-MD programs in addressing national health care needs.

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