

LICENSURE – OSTEOPATHIC PHYSICIANS

What basic qualifications must an osteopathic physician meet to be eligible to obtain a license in Washington?

Washington requires the following basic eligibility requirements for obtaining an osteopathic medical license:¹

- Graduation from an accredited school of osteopathic medicine approved by the Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery (Board).
- Completion of at least one year of postgraduate training in a program approved by the Board.
- Proof of physical and mental capability to safely practice osteopathic medicine. (The Board may require an osteopathic physician to submit to one or more examinations to determine that this requirement is met.)
- Proof that the applicant has not been guilty of any conduct which would constitute grounds for denial, suspension or revocation of a license.
- Successful completion of the examination prepared or approved by the Board.²

Osteopathic physicians wishing to obtain an osteopathic medical license in Washington must file a completed application with the Board on a form approved by the Board,³ submit all required fees,⁴ furnish proof of all of the basic eligibility requirements for a license,⁵ and provide such other information as the Board may require.⁶

What examination is required to obtain licensure as an osteopathic physician?

Applicants for licensure as osteopathic physicians must pass the Federation of State Licensing Board (FLEX) with a minimum score of 75 on each component of the FLEX I and II examination, or satisfactorily pass the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) with a minimum score as established by the coordinating agencies (the Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States and the National Board of Medical Examiners), and obtain at least a 75% overall average on a board-administered examination on osteopathic principles and practices.⁷ Note: All applications for osteopathic physician license by USMLE examination in Washington must be received in the Office of Health Professions Quality Assurance Division

¹ RCW 18.57.020.

² RCW 18.57.080.

³ RCW 18.57.020.

⁴ WAC 246-853-990.

⁵ RCW 18.57.020.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ WAC 246-853-020.

of the Department of Health no later than September 12 for the following December examination, and March 29 for the following June examination.⁸

An applicant who has passed all parts of the examination given by the National Board of Osteopathic Examiners may be granted a license without further examination.⁹

May an osteopathic physician who has already been licensed in another state have the examination requirement waived?

Yes. The Board has the discretion to waive the examination requirement for an osteopathic physician who has previously been licensed in another state.¹⁰ The osteopathic physician must submit a certified copy of the license, certify that the standard of requirements adopted by the issuing state is substantially equal to those provided for in Washington, and pay the required fee.¹¹ However, the Board is not permitted to waive the examination requirement for any physician who has been licensed in another state but who has previously failed the examination held in Washington.¹²

May an osteopathic physician who has already been licensed in another state receive a temporary permit to practice osteopathic medicine in Washington after his or her application is submitted but before it is processed?

Yes. To obtain a temporary practice permit, an osteopathic physician who is licensed to practice in another state must file a completed license application form, indicate on the form the desire to receive a temporary permit, and pay the application and temporary practice permit fee.

The Board may issue a temporary permit upon receipt of the following:¹³

- Documentation from the state where the applicant is licensed that the licensing standards used were substantially equivalent to Washington's standards.
- A completed application form on which the applicant indicates he or she wishes to receive a temporary permit and application and temporary permit fees.
- Verification of all state licenses, whether active or inactive, indicating that the applicant is not subject to charges or disciplinary action for unprofessional conduct or impairment.
- Verification from the Federation of State Medical Board's disciplinary action data bank that the applicant has not been disciplined by a state board or federal agency.

⁸ WAC 246-853-260(1).

⁹ WAC 246-853-020.

¹⁰ RCW 18.57.130.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

¹³ WAC 246-853-135(1).

The temporary practice permit expires upon issuance of a license or 180 days after issuance of the temporary permit, whichever occurs first.¹⁴

Are there licensing requirements for osteopathic physicians regarding AIDS education?

Yes. Prior to obtaining a license, an osteopathic physician must have at least four hours of education and training on the prevention, transmission, and treatment of AIDS.¹⁵ The AIDS education and training must include—but is not limited to—etiology and epidemiology; testing and counseling; infection control guidelines; clinical manifestations and treatment; legal and ethical issues, including confidentiality; and psychosocial issues, including special population considerations.¹⁶ Upon licensing, an osteopathic physician must provide a written declaration that he or she has completed the minimum AIDS education and training.¹⁷ Osteopathic physicians must keep records documenting their AIDS training and describing what they learned for two years.¹⁸

When must an osteopathic physician's license be renewed?

Osteopathic physicians must renew their licenses annually on the licensee's birth date.¹⁹

What happens if an osteopathic physician fails to renew his or her medical license?

Failure to renew an osteopathic license shall invalidate the license to practice osteopathic medicine and surgery, and the osteopathic physician may not practice until the license is returned to active status.²⁰

An active license that has been expired for less than one year may be brought current by payment of renewal fees, penalty fees, and any applicable surcharges and compliance with current continuing education and competency requirements.²¹

If the license has been expired for more than one year but less than three years, to obtain reinstatement the osteopathic physician must complete an abbreviated application form, pay all renewal fees, penalty fees, applicable surcharges, and the expired credential reissuance fee, provide a written declaration that he or she has not voluntarily given up any license or privilege and has not been restricted in the practice in lieu of or to avoid formal action, and provide a written declaration that continuing education and competency requirements for the two most recent years have been met, and provide any other written declarations or documentation that may be required.²²

¹⁴ WAC 246-853-135(3).

¹⁵ WAC 246-919-380; WAC 246-12-260.

¹⁶ WAC 246-12-270(2).

¹⁷ WAC 246-12-280(1).

¹⁸ WAC 246-12-280(2).

¹⁹ WAC 246-853-990(1).

²⁰ QAC 246-12-040(1).

²¹ WAC 246-12-040(3)(a).

²² WAC 246-12-040(3)(b).

Any osteopathic physician whose license has expired for over three years and who has been in active practice in another United States jurisdiction must submit verification of active practice from any other United States jurisdiction, do the same things as an osteopathic physician whose license has been expired for more than one year but less than three years, must submit verification of active practice from another United States jurisdiction to obtain reinstatement, and if not previously provided, must provide proof of AIDS education as discussed above.²³

An osteopathic physician whose license has expired for more than three years and who has not been in active practice in another United States jurisdiction may be required, in the Board's discretion, to be re-examined.²⁴

Are there continuing education requirements for renewal of license?

Yes. See CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION.

Are there any osteopathic physicians who are exempt from the licensure requirements?

Yes. The following osteopathic physicians are exempt from the licensure requirements:

- Commissioned medical officers serving in the United States government or military service or employed by a federal agency who practice osteopathic medicine, in the discharge of official duties.²⁵
- An osteopathic physician serving a period of clinical postgraduate medical training in a postgraduate program approved by the Board, as long as the performance of such services are pursuant to a course of instruction and are supervised by licensed personnel.²⁶

Do osteopathic medical students in Washington need to be licensed?

No, as long as the person is a student in an accredited school of osteopathic medicine and surgery approved by the Board and the student only performs services pursuant to a course of instruction or assignments from his or her instructor and under the supervision and control of a licensed osteopathic physician or a medical doctor.²⁷

²³ WAC 246-853-210(2); WAC 246-12-040(3)(c).

²⁴ WAC 246-853-210(3).

²⁵ RCW 18.57.040(4).

²⁶ RCW 18.57.040(8).

²⁷ RCW 18.57.040(7).