

What can you do with a JD and an MD?

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Students who are interested in pursuing dual professional degrees should be highly motivated to withstand the rigors of a long course of education. The rewards of this course of study can be great, however. Students who pursue both law and medical degrees may do so more out of intellectual curiosity than a desire to pursue a defined career path. The real reward of interdisciplinary training is the ability to adapt to a rapidly changing world and search for solutions to complex problems that present in unconventional ways.

There are multiple career paths available to someone with training in both fields, and the path, or paths, one chooses will vary according to life needs and personal desires. Thus, it is difficult to say with any certainty what one could do with the degrees. It may be more appropriate to ask what one *wants* to do with these degrees. The following suggestions are options and examples of careers that overlap both law and medicine. The list is not exhaustive of the possibilities, and every example may not be feasible or desirable for a given individual. Much more than training in one profession, interdisciplinary training suggests opportunities. It does not prescribe one's course in life.

For those primarily interested in legal work or public service, it would be possible to pursue careers in the practice of health law, business law, regulatory law, food and drug law, or intellectual property law, among other specializations. Medical management careers may be targeted towards individual practice groups, managed care organizations, hospitals or clinics. The combination of degrees may prepare the more scholarly for careers teaching law. And you could always run for elected office, but of course you have to get elected.

For those with a primarily medical orientation, it would be possible to pursue a traditional medical practice. Most medical specialties have and need individual practitioners trained in the law. Those with an interest in medical policy should be able to get involved at any level of policy organization from professional societies to elected office. Finally, your skills in both legal and medical clinics might instill a desire to share your knowledge as a medical school professor.

Individuals who are interested in the possibility of combining these degrees are encouraged to seek further information early in their training. The Colleges of Medicine and Law offer a unique opportunity for highly motivated students to become interdisciplinary leaders.

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