

International Practice Rights of U.S.-trained D.O.s

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Osteopathic Medicine

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[Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine \(D.O.\)](#)

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The procedure by which international countries consider granting physician licensure to foreigners varies widely. For U.S. trained physicians, the ability to qualify for "unlimited practice rights" also varies according to one's degree, [M.D.](#) or [D.O.](#)^[1]

The **Bureau on International Osteopathic Medical Education and Affairs (BIOMEA)** is an independent board of the [American Osteopathic Association](#). The BIOMEA monitors the licensing and registration practices of physicians in countries outside of the United States and advances the recognition of American-trained D.O.s. Towards this end, the BIOMEA works with international health organizations like the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), the [Pan American Health Organization](#) (PAHO) as well as other groups.^[2]

The [American Medical Student Association](#) strongly advocates for U.S.-trained D.O. international practice rights "equal to that of [Allopathic](#) physicians."^[3]

[\[edit\]](#) **International variations in the D.O. degree**

In the United States, D.O.s are “doctors of osteopathic medicine” who are trained as physicians. In [France](#), [Germany](#), and [Switzerland](#), some osteopathic practitioners are [M.D.s](#) who take additional courses in [osteopathy](#) after completing their [medical training](#). In the [United Kingdom](#), [Canada](#), [Australia](#), and [New Zealand](#), “osteopaths” are trained in osteopathic principles and [osteopathic manipulative treatment](#) but are not physicians. According to the BIOMEA, in most countries outside the United States, D.O. stands for “diploma of osteopathy,” not “doctor of osteopathic medicine.” The difference is that osteopaths are not trained or licensed as physicians, and therefore do not carry the same practice rights, such as surgery and prescribing medication. However, osteopaths in some countries do act as primary care providers, coordinating treatment with fully licensed [primary care](#) physicians.^[4]

[\[edit\]](#) **Licensing of Osteopathic physicians and osteopaths**

Every country has different requirements and a different way of licensing or registering osteopathic physicians and osteopaths. The only osteopathic practitioners that the [U.S. Department of Education](#) recognizes as physicians are graduates of [osteopathic medical colleges in the United States](#).^[5] Therefore, osteopaths who have trained outside the United States are not eligible for medical licensure in the United States. On the other hand, US-trained D.O.s are currently able to practice in 45 countries with full medical rights and in several others with restricted rights.

The following is a table of International Practice Rights of U.S trained Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine, as listed by the American Osteopathic Association.^[1]

Country	Year of latest policy	Medical Practice Rights	Requirements for Licensure
Argentina	1994	Unlimited.	Full license granted to US-trained D.O.
Australia	2000	Restricted.	Varies by state.
Austria	1994	Unlimited.	Hospital must have position unable to be filled by Austrian physician.
Bahamas	1997	Unlimited.	US license recognized.
Bolivia	1988	Unknown.	No response from embassy.
Brazil	2000	Unlimited.	Completion of Brazilian board exam & some training in Brazilian hospital is required.
Canada (varies by province)	Alberta	Unlimited.	LMCC, Step 1&2 required
	British Columbia	Unlimited.	LMCC required
	Manitoba	Unlimited.	US license recognized.
	New Brunswick	Unlimited.	LMCC required, except DOs registered in Maine
	Newfoundland	Pending.	Currently under review.
	NW Territories	Unlimited.	US license recognized.
	Nova Scotia	Unlimited.	Only D.O.s from ACGME (US or Canadian) residency.
	Ontario	Unlimited.	Only D.O.s from ACGME residency.
	Prince Edward I.	Restricted.	No provision for US D.O.
	Quebec	Unlimited.	1 year GME in Quebec & French fluency required.
Saskatchewan	Limited.	OMM only.	
Yukon Territory	Unlimited.	US license recognized.	
Cayman Islands (UK)	1983	Unlimited.	US license recognized.
Chile	1993.	Unlimited.	A written exam, in Spanish, is required.

China	1994	Unlimited.	US-DOs are permitted to apply for "Short Term Medical Practice" only.
Costa Rica	1993	Unlimited.	Several requirements. (Same as for any foreign MD.)
Denmark	1995	Unknown.	No response from embassy.
Dominican Republic	2000	Unlimited.	US license recognized.
Ecuador		Unlimited.	Several. Same as for any foreign MD.
Finland	1996	Unlimited.	Several. Same as for any foreign MD.
France	1988	Restricted.	OMM only. French government does not recognize osteopathic medicine.
Germany	1993	Unlimited.	No special requirements. Decisions made on individual basis.
Greece	2004	Unlimited.	Difficult. Greek citizenship required.
Hong Kong	1998	Unlimited.	Written examination. Personal interview. Training approval.
India	1999	Undetermined.	Indian nationality status required.
Indonesia	1992	Unlimited.	All foreign physicians affiliated with a University project or a mission have unlimited practice rights. No private practice allowed.
Ireland	1999	Under review.	The Irish government has repeatedly declined to recognize US trained D.O.s as physicians. The American Osteopathic Association president has said that obtaining unlimited practice rights for US-trained D.O.s in Ireland is a top priority in 2007. ^[6]
Lebanon	2004	Unlimited.	AOA letter required. Examination required.

New Zealand	2005	Unlimited.	Hearing required. Case-by-case basis.
Nigeria	1999	Unlimited.	An appearance before the Nigerian Medical Council & an oral quiz.
Singapore	1993	None.	Singapore does not recognize US DO degree. Only recognizes US MD degree from 11 US allopathic schools.
Spain	1994	None.	No medical practice rights.
Sweden	1996	Unlimited.	US license recognized.
Taiwan	2005	Unlimited.	The ROC government recognizes US D.O. degree. Applicants must take Taiwan Examination Yuan to obtain Taiwanese license.
United Kingdom	2005	Unlimited.	US-trained DOs eligible for full medical practice rights. Applicants must pass the PLAB examination and work for one year in the National Health Service. Following that year, the applicants will be able to apply for a license to practice privately.

Table data from *AOA International License Summary*.^[1]

[\[edit\]](#) External Links

US-Trained DOs in Ireland. American Osteopathic Association President's Blog. [\[7\]](#)

- [^] ^{[a](#)} ^{[b](#)} ^{[c](#)} *AOA International License Summary*. American Osteopathic Association. Council on International Osteopathic Medical Education and Affairs.[\[1\]](#)
- [^] *International*. American Osteopathic Association. DO-online.org [\[2\]](#)
- [^] *Principles regarding osteopathic medicine*. AMSA, PPP [\[3\]](#)
- [^] McNerney, Joseph. Chairman, Bureau on International Osteopathic Medical Education and Affairs. *J Am Osteopath Assoc* Jan 2007 Vol 107;No 1 p 7 [\[4\]](#)
- [^] *Notices*. Federal Register. Vol. 70, No. 190. 3 Oct 2005. [\[\[5\]\]](#)
- [^] Peter B. Ajluni *US-Trained DOs in Ireland*. AOA president's blog. 12 Mar 2007. [\[6\]](#)

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