

Medical Physicist

Make sure radiation used on patients is exactly right. Physics, a residency, and three board exams.

TYPICAL PAY

\$172,250

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$82k to \$274k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

8 to 12 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Cancer centers, hospital imaging departments, universities, consul...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Physics, calculus and chemistry. This is a physics career first and a health career second.
- 2 Bachelor's degree in physics** 4 years
Four years. Engineering physics or a closely related degree is usually accepted too.
- 3 Accredited graduate program** 2 to 6 years
A master's, doctorate, certificate or Doctor of Medical Physics program accredited by CAMPEP (the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Physics Educational Programs).
- 4 Part 1 board exam** Once a year, usually August
A computer-based exam in two sections, general and clinical. You can take it while still enrolled in an accredited program.
- 5 Accredited residency, then Parts 2 and 3** 2 to 3 years
A paid two year clinical residency, then the specialty written exam and finally a remote oral exam.

Pros and cons

- + Among the best paid physics careers in the country
- + The residency is a salaried job, not unpaid training
- + Real patient impact without being a doctor
- Eight to twelve years of training with an exam gate at the end
- Residency places are scarce and the bottleneck is real
- Mistakes in radiation dose are serious and the checks are relentless

Good to know

Three exams, and the last one is spoken

American Board of Radiology certification runs Part 1 and Part 2 as written exams once a year, usually in August, then a Part 3 oral certifying exam offered twice a year in which you talk an examiner th...

Accreditation covers five kinds of program

The medical physics accrediting commission accredits graduate degrees, clinical residencies, professional doctorates, certificate programs and continuing education. Almost every route to board elig...

Optional boosts

Therapeutic medical physics. Diagnostic medical physics. Nuclear medical physics. Health physics.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Physicists (19-2012.00)

O*NET OnLine: Physicists summary, listing Medical Physicist as a reported title

American Board of Radiology: medical physics initial certification

Commission on Accreditation of Medical Physics Educational Programs

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/medical-physicist>



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