

# Is Acupuncture School Right For Me?

Do you have another source of income so that you don't need to live off your acupuncture earnings?

Yes

No

Do you have \$100,000+ that you don't need otherwise?

Yes

No

Yes

Are you willing to go \$100,000 in debt?

No

## Bad Reasons To Go To Acupuncture School

I am/ I always have been/ I will forever be fascinated by "Oriental Medicine" and Asian philosophy!

Do you really need a Master's degree that costs \$100,000? The teaching quality in many acupuncture schools is notoriously low. You would have a better experience and learn more at a fraction of the cost by: reading a lot of books, taking free online classes, practicing tai chi and/or qi gong, or living in Asia.

I like helping people!

There are lots of ways to help people that do not cost \$100,000. Have you looked into them? Acupuncture might seem really special but trust us, it's not *that* special.

I received acupuncture and I loved it.

Getting acupuncture is not like being an acupuncturist or an acupuncture student. People who like getting pedicures don't think that they'd like to become nail technicians; however, a lot of acupuncturists are earning the same as nail technicians, despite their massive student loans.

I want to be a healer.

A large percentage of people who go to acupuncture school either never practice, or stop practicing after less than five years. They give up acupuncture and go back to their non-healing jobs with \$100,000 of debt. There are lots of other, more practical ways to be a healer.

It sounds like a really cool job.

Unfortunately there are almost no jobs. Ask any acupuncture school if they host job fairs with real employers looking to hire. Expect uncomfortable silence. The handful of real acupuncture jobs that boast professional wages and benefits will have thousands of applicants, many of whom have been practicing for years. You are not going to get one of those jobs right out of acupuncture school.

I hear it's a growing field.

That's because acupuncture schools keep pumping out graduates, but most of those graduates don't stay in practice very long.

I want to be rich.

Hahahahahaha. NO.

I'm a massage therapist and it's really hard on my body; I think it would be easier to be an acupuncturist.

Many massage therapists who go to acupuncture school with the hope of transitioning to acupuncture often end up doing mostly massage. Acupuncture and massage are different enough that you can't just exchange them, and acupuncture is harder to market than massage.

I hear that an acupuncture education is deeply personally enriching and transformative.

We bet you heard that from an acupuncture school! There are lots of personally enriching, transformative things that don't cost \$100,000.

I want a flexible career and like the idea of being self-employed.

Owning your own business means MORE responsibility, not less. That translates into less flexibility. Self-employed people don't get paid vacations. An acupuncturist has to spend a lot of hours in their clinic consistently for their business to thrive, which means your life revolves around your work, not the other way around. Also, starting a new business when you are already \$100,000 in debt is one of the worst positions you could possibly be in.

## Good Reasons To Go To POCA Tech

### I know what a punk does.

- I know that practicing community acupuncture is fast-paced, physically demanding work that will place me in contact with a diverse patient base, including people I may not like, agree with, or even find easy to be around.
- I know that acupuncture is not magic – though it might seem that way sometimes – and there are lots of ordinary skills like communication and teamwork that I will need to pay attention to in order to support people in their healing.
- I've watched all the videos on POCA Tv and I can't wait to do those things in real life.
- I'm looking forward to spending years listening to people tell me about their constipation, rashes, insomnia, headaches, aching backs and all the other garden-variety problems that ordinary people have.
- I know that if I can't find a job, I will have to become proficient in a long list of other skills in addition to punking in order to open and run my own clinic.
- Status isn't that meaningful to me. I don't mind being unimportant in the eyes of the world, and I want to take care of other unimportant people.

### I want to be a punk, and I know this because

- I have experience taking care of or serving people in some form, and I like it.
- I like being useful to, and present with, people who are in pain and/or stressed out.
- I have gotten acupuncture in a POCA clinic as often as I can. I've watched the punks at work, and I want to do what they do.
- I am a POCA member, I've been on the forums, and I identify with the way the punks think and talk about their jobs.
- I've volunteered for POCA and I love supporting my cooperative; I'm looking forward to doing that as a punk.
- I've volunteered in a POCA clinic and I would love to pour years of my life into sustaining a place like that for, at best, modest compensation.

### I know what a punk earns.

- I've read the POCA annual survey and I've looked at compensation for both owners and employees. I've thought about how this will impact me and my family.
- I'm prepared to open my own business and run my own clinic if I can't find a punking job in the area I want to live.
- I understand that enrolling in POCA Tech requires me to get a license and work in a POCA clinic (which could include starting one up) for at least three years after I graduate.
- I don't aspire to being wealthy. I do need to have work that I enjoy, and I want a job that provides a consistent, if modest income.

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