



Herbal Medicine Credential Fact Sheet





About ACHS

Transforming lives and educating the world through holistic healthcare and sustainable business.

American College of Healthcare Sciences (ACHS) has been educating industry-leading holistic health professionals since 1978. We are a world-renowned, accredited, fully online institute of higher education, offering certificate, diploma, and degrees programs in Aromatherapy, Herbal Medicine, Holistic Nutrition, Holistic Spa Management, Integrative Health and Wellness Coaching.

ACHS is accredited by the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC). The Distance Education Accrediting Commission is listed by the U.S. Department of Education as a recognized accrediting

Campus

5005 S. Macadam Ave
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Apothecary Shoppe

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agency and recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).



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Considering a Career in Herbal Medicine?

American College of Healthcare Sciences is one of the few accredited Colleges in the U.S. that offers professional, online clinical herbalism education. Our experts have compiled the top questions we hear from students about considering a career in herbal medicine. This essential resource is a starting point for learning more about the industry, the professional organizations that can support your success, and legal information about practicing herbal medicine.



Pictured: ACHS graduate Jennifer Archie, owner of The Good Earth Holistic Health Center.

Read more about Jennifer's business online at

<https://info.achs.edu/blog/alumni-highlight-jennifer-archie/>.

Please Note

The information in this course is not intended to take the place of professional legal advice.

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While there are currently no licensing requirements for herbalists in the United States, ACHS graduates must not represent themselves as licensed medical practitioners nor claim to treat, diagnose, cure, or prescribe unless otherwise licensed to do. Herbal professionals must also comply with all state regulations that may apply to their practice, including any required state registration, business license and tax requirements, and other professional regulations that may vary by state. Since use of any material by others is beyond the control of American College of Healthcare Sciences, no expressed or implied guarantee as to the effectiveness of this information can be given nor liability taken.

Industry Trends

Consumer demand for natural products, including herbs and dietary supplements, led to a market size valued at USD 82.27 billion for 2020 with continued growth expected,¹ so herbal medicine and wellness professionals will continue to see opportunities emerge.

Following are highlights of professional trends for herbalists:

What is the average salary of an herbalist?

The pay for an herbalist can range from minimum wage working in a retail herb shop to owners of high-end herbal companies worth millions of dollars. According to salary.com, the average Herbalist salary in the United States is \$56,988 as of February 26, 2021, but the salary range typically falls between \$47,071 and \$70,337.²

Do you have to work for yourself, or can you work for someone else?

Careers in herbalism vary. Many herbalists are busy entrepreneurs earning income from various sources such as clinical practice, teaching, product sales, public speaking, and writing. Your skills may lead you to pursue work in the herb industry as an herb buyer, formulator, researcher, consultant, retailer, grower, or herbal product maker. Remember, education and training is an essential foundation for developing your expertise. As with any profession, however, many factors contribute to a successful professional career including skills like written and oral communication, critical thinking, and an entrepreneurial mindset.

For those interested in clinical practice, getting practical experience working with other health care professionals may be an excellent next step. These opportunities might include volunteering, working as an intern, or seeking a mentor. The practice of herbal medicine is not yet legally recognized, and as such, career opportunities are still emerging.

¹ Grandview Research. (2021, February). Complementary And Alternative Medicine Market Report, 2021-2028.

<https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/complementary-alternative-medicine-market>.

² Salary.com (n.d.). Herbalist Salary in the United States.

<https://www.salary.com/research/salary/posting/herbalist-salary>

What type of job opportunities are there in this field outside of owning my own business?

While you may not find a specific job opening for a herbalist, there are opportunities in the herbal industry such as retail herbal sales, wholesale herbal production, herbal education, community classes, herbal consulting practices, and growing demand in the cannabis market, which may require specific additional study. Herbalists can operate their own practice or work directly with other integrative medicine doctors. Other career options include cultivating or 'wildcrafting' herbs for medicinal use, working in the health and wellness industry including corporate wellness, becoming a production or processing specialist, and specializing in quality assurance and good manufacturing practices(GMP).³ Herbal medicine can also be an important adjunct to another healthcare practice. For example, it's important that pharmacists have training in botanical safety, including recommended daily allowances and cautions and contraindications.



This is *Calendula Calendula officinalis*. Photo taken by ACHS alumni Kimberly Konkol.

³ Study.com (n.d.). *Herbalist Career Information and Employment Outlook*.

Herbal Medicine Education

What type of herbal medicine does ACHS teach?

The scientific study of herbal medicine at ACHS is based on Western herbal medicine. ACHS herbal medicine classes and curriculum focus on materia medica (a branch of medical science that deals with the sources, nature, properties, and preparation of herbal drugs),⁴ pharmacognosy, safety issues, historical uses, including drug-herb interactions, uses, preparations, and research and skills required to be able to use and recommend herbs and herbal protocols to support health and wellness goals. Depending on each unique ACHS experienced herbal professor’s educational background and clinical experiences, the focus may include Chinese, Ayurveda, or Native American systems of herbalism. All herbal courses are supported by an experiential lab kit containing a select range of certified organic herbs studied in the program.

What is the role of a master herbalist?

In general, the term “master herbalist” designates in-depth training in herbalism beyond introductory knowledge or a certificate. A master herbalist is usually trained to educate others about appropriate holistic health protocols using herbs and natural products to support and rebalance the body and restore general good health. It is ideal for medical professionals to increase their knowledge of this exciting field and integrate it into their practice, including MDs, Psychologists, Pharmacists, Nurses, Veterinarians, Respiratory Therapists, or Social Workers.

What is the difference between a certified herbalist and a master herbalist?

The term “Certified” in any profession, including “Certified Herbalist,” means having certification by a third-party agency that does not currently exist in the United States. A Master Herbalist is also not a legal certification. ACHS’s professional herbalism programs meet the education requirements to apply for professional membership with the American Herbalists Guild to achieve the designation Registered Herbalist - RH (AHG).

⁴ Definition of MATERIA MEDICA. Merriam-webster.com. (2021). Retrieved 4 March 2021, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/materia%20medica>.

Professional Credentialing

What's next after completing my herbal education?

Following your graduation from an eligible ACHS herbal program, ACHS highly recommends working towards the American Herbalists Guild's Registered Herbalist designation. Learn more from the following FAQs about professional credentialing, and please contact ACHS's Director of Alumni and Career Services for ACHS graduate support services.

Is ACHS a school member of the American Herbalist Guild (AHG)?

Yes! ACHS maintains Institutional School Membership in AHG. Benefits include a subscription to the Journal of the American Herbalists Guild (JAHG) for the school library. ACHS offers all student members of AHG an ACHS tuition discount.

Do ACHS programs qualify me to become a professional member and Registered Herbalist RH (AHG) of the American Herbalist Guild?

The Registered Herbalist designation requires that you maintain a professional level membership in AHG. ACHS offers several programs that meet the educational requirements for professional membership, including:

- Diploma in Herbal Studies Master Herbalist
- Diploma in Holistic Health Practice with Herbal Medicine electives
- Associate of Applied Science in Complementary Alternative Medicine with Specialization in Herbal Studies
- Bachelor of Science in Holistic Nutrition with Herbal Medicine electives
- Bachelor of Science in Integrative Health Sciences
- Master of Science in Complementary Alternative Medicine with Herbal Medicine electives
- Master of Science in Herbal Medicine

In addition to the education requirements, upon graduation from these ACHS programs, graduates need to complete the clinical hours required to become a Registered Herbalist. Clinical training is a minimum of two years and may include independent practice, formal mentorship, clinical supervision, or a combination of all three. The clinical experience must total at least 400 hours, with at least 100 different clients and a minimum caseload of four clients per week. ACHS can assist graduates in locating a suitable mentor.

New for 2021, ACHS also offers a support module for graduates that provides a guided pathway for completing the AHG application to become a Registered Herbalist. Please contact alumni@achs.edu for more information.

AHG Definition of Clinical Experience: Clinical experience must encompass more than informal consultations with family and friends. To qualify, sessions with individual clients must include:

- A full health history intake
- Differential assessment
- Herbal protocols
- A reasonable number of formal follow-up visits.

Note that providing herb recommendations in a retail sales environment does not count as clinical experience unless it includes all of the above.

For more information on eligibility requirements to become a Registered Herbalist, visit the AHG website at www.americanherbalistsguild.com. Download the [AHG Mentorship Handbook](#) and learn more about <http://www.americanherbalistsguild.com/mentors>



Pictured: ACHS graduate Shannon Mesneak's herbal apothecary, Let's Be Holistic - <https://www.letsbeholistic.com/>.

Legal Considerations

Do ACHS programs qualify me to practice herbal medicine legally?

An ACHS.edu herbal studies/herbal medicine certificate, diploma, or degree provides graduates with valuable skills that may enhance a current career path or offer an opportunity to work in the holistic health community. However, graduation from any herbalism program does not convey any license to practice.

Currently, there are no licensing requirements for herbalists in the United States. Additionally, herbalists should be cautious in claiming to treat, diagnose, or cure any illness because doing so may be considered practicing medicine without a license and a violation of State Medical Practice Acts. Graduates are responsible for confirming that the certificate, diploma, or degree program they earn will meet their personal and career objectives before enrollment.

Can an herbal student use the terminology to prescribe, treat, diagnose, cure, or heal?

Herbalism has a holistic approach and is focused on supporting the natural processes with botanical agents, **not** on prescribing or treating. Treatment for medical problems is legal only by someone with a medical license, such as an MD, DO, ND, nurse practitioner, acupuncturist, or other professionals licensed by each state. In general, holistic providers, such as herbalists, work from an educational standpoint, make suggestions, and support wellness goals.

Are there any licenses or certifications required to have a business in this field?

There are currently no professional licenses or certifications to have an herbal business in the United States. However, registering your business with an herb or holistic health professional organization and having recognized credentials in herbal studies or herbal medicine gives credibility to your business.

There are local and federal requirements for operating a business. This includes registering your business with the appropriate local, state, and federal entities to ensure you have the necessary business licenses and accounts for paying taxes for your business.

ACHS teaches more about setting up your business in the [NAT 306 Holistic Health Consulting and Business Skills](#) course. This course is taken in most ACHS undergraduate programs and can be taken by anyone interested in learning more about operating a small holistic health business.

Once I graduate in Herbal medicine from ACHS, how do I become a certified/licensed /clinical herbalist?

In the United States, there is no licensing for herbalists or a "licensed herbalist" at the state or federal level. You may see the term "clinical herbalist" or "certified herbalist" or "licensed herbalist". Note, these terms are not a legal designation. They may indicate an herbalist that has completed additional training in the use of herbs to support health and wellness goals.



The ACHS Apothecary Shoppe sells books, essential oils, and herbs, many of which are Oregon Tilth Certified Organic and lab-tested pesticide-free. Contact apothecary@achs.edu for information about wholesale buying options.

Photo by ACHS alumni Lindsay Little.

Cannabis

How do the skills training I receive with your courses apply to the cannabis industry?

ACHS herbal programs' are not specific to cannabis; however, the skills you acquire will provide the knowledge to use and recommend herbs and herbal protocols to support health and wellness goals. ACHS is continually developing new courses and programs and strives to educate students and consumers about emerging markets such as dietary supplement safety, cannabis, and psilocybin therapy, for example. Check back regularly for new micro-credentials at learn.achs.edu.

Identifying, Growing, and Producing Herbs

How much will I learn in regards to the collection and identification of plants?

You will learn the botanical identifiers for each herb that is studied. For specifics on identifying medicinal plants in your neighborhood, you will also need to use local identification books and guides. If you are interested in wild harvesting in your area, we recommend you also train with a local expert.

Will I learn about growing herbs and gardening?

Yes, the ACHS herbal courses have general information about creating a herbal garden; how to cultivate herbs, harvest, dry, and store herbs; and how to plant and grow a herbal garden or create compost and mulch. ACHS courses emphasize experiential hands-on learning, and herbal medicine courses include practical herb kits for making preparations so students experience working with natural products as well.

Will I learn how to grow herbs in a nursery or farm environment?

Commercial herb growing and harvesting are topics that are covered in each herbal monograph. However, the ACHS herbal programs provide more of an overview to growing herbs and gardening rather than an agricultural focus.



About the Authors

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Dorene Petersen

BA, DIP.NT, DIP.ACU, RH (AHG)

Dorene is a New Zealand-trained Naturopath and aromatherapy, herbalism, and holistic wellness expert with decades of experience. She founded the American College of Healthcare Sciences (ACHS) in 1978.



Amanda Lattin

BA, MAT, DIP. AROMA., MH, RA

Amanda is a professor and the Aromatherapy Program Chair at ACHS. She has had a passion for growing and using nutritional and medicinal plants since she planted her first garden at age six.

About the Authors



Glen Nagel

ND, RH (AHG)

Glen Nagel is a practicing herbalist, licensed Naturopathic physician, and all-around herbal wise guy. He has a lifelong interest in plants and nature and believes in teaching with humor and hands-on experience.



Learn More About Herbalism

Learn to harness the therapeutic powers of botanicals through every aspect of herbal medicine.

At ACHS, you'll study topics ranging from the history of herbal medicine to therapeutic uses and active constituents of herbs through hands-on, experiential learning. Our courses cover everything you need to know to successfully practice herbal medicine on its own or alongside your other holistic health training.

Check Out Our Classes