

PRE-PHARMACY RESOURCES

When reviewing pharmacy schools, it is important to remember that these programs are extremely competitive. A **PharmD is a doctoral degree** and takes an extensive amount of work and school to complete. Some things to keep in mind when applying are:

- **The minimum GPA listed on a program's website is usually much lower than what students actually come into the program with.** The AACP has several tables and directories that list out what most schools have as their average GPA of accepted applicants and can be viewed [here](#).
- You must check each program's page thoroughly for **shadowing or experiential hour requirements**. Not all programs require them, but many do and having direct volunteer, shadowing, or work hours in a pharmacy setting could be a factor in admission decisions.
- **Rolling admissions** is when programs admit students as they receive applications. It is important to **apply early** to have the best chances of being accepted. The entire application process takes a considerable amount of time, so it is good practice to begin preparing your materials before applications open.

PREREQUISITE COURSES

Most common prerequisite courses:

English Composition I & II – ENGL 1101 & 1102
Principles of Biology I & II – BIOL 1107/L & 1108/L
Principles of Chemistry I & II – CHEM 1211/L & 1212/L
Organic Chemistry I & II – CHEM 3361/L & 3362/L
Biochemistry – CHEM 3510
Microbiology – BIOL 4180
Human Anatomy and Physiology I & II – BIOL 2160 & 2170
Probability and Statistics – MATH 2600
Calculus – MATH 1261

Requirements can vary from school to school, so be sure to check each of your prospective programs' requirements. View the [PharmCAS School Directory](#) to see each program's specific requirements.

***Talk with your academic advisor before choosing courses!*

PCAT PREPARATION

According to Kaplan Test Prep, the official test prep provider for the PCAT, students should expect to spend between **1-3 months** studying for the exam. Taking a course to help you prepare is highly suggested to gain access to full-length practice tests and realistic questions that you could encounter from the test. You are given **205 minutes** to complete the test, which is made up of **192 multiple-choice questions** covering subjects of **biological processes, chemical processes, critical reading, and quantitative reasoning** (see [PCAT FAQs](#) from the AACP website here). You can search for resources such as Kaplan's Test Options for more in-depth information about the test, and view registration dates/deadlines through PharmCAS's Test Score site. About 85% of pharmacy programs require the PCAT, so be sure to thoroughly read the requirements for programs of interest. PharmCAS offers a [PharmD School Directory](#) that provides an overview of programs and their testing requirements, however you should still always thoroughly read each school's website for instructions and minimum scores.

PERSONAL STATEMENT & SECONDARY APPLICATIONS/SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Personal Statements used to apply to pharmacy school should be general and not program specific. When applying through a common application service, they will forward your information to the schools you select including your general personal statement. PharmCAS states that your essay "**should address why you selected pharmacy as a career and how the Doctor of Pharmacy degree relates to your immediate and long-term professional goals. Describe how your personal, educational, and professional background will help you achieve your goals.**" Pay attention to the character count allotted for the essay (4,500 characters), and remember that this could take spaces into account! Follow the instructions listed carefully to ensure that you follow all of the parameters set. You should start writing your personal statement early so that you can get adequate feedback prior to submitting your application. Some schools may require you to submit **supplemental materials** once you have submitted your application through PharmCAS. Often the programs you selected will reach out to you once they have received your common application and

request the additional information they want. It is important to thoroughly read through each program's requirements to know what you need to have prepared.

OBTAINING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION/EVALUATIONS

Developing meaningful relationships with faculty is vital when seeking letters of recommendation. Begin thinking about faculty who you have or will have taken several classes with, have similar research interests with, or that you feel a connection to, so that you can begin building those relationships from day 1. Remember that a person's title is not near as important as how well they know you as a student and as a person. When requesting letters of recommendation, quality highly outweighs quantity. **It is important to check each program's requirements on letter writers.** Programs could require a reference from **science faculty, a licensed pharmacist or practitioner, or a previous supervisor outside of academics.** It is ideal to acquire at least one pharmacist that you have shadowed or worked with and most programs require at least 3 references. **You will be submitting your reference requests through PharmCAS.** View the PharmCAS Evaluations guidelines here.

When asking for letters, remember to be gracious and *ask* for the letter. "Would you be willing to," is usually a good way to start the conversation rather than demanding that they write you a letter. Faculty expect you to ask, and they will most likely agree as long as they feel comfortable speaking on your behalf. Be sure to give the faculty member, pharmacist, or whomever you plan to ask plenty of notice, generally a month is suggested. Providing a resume, CV, personal statement, or some other document will show that you are serious about obtaining a letter and give the faculty member some reference as to what you want them to talk about. **ALWAYS REMEMBER TO THANK YOUR REFERENCES!**

INTERVIEWING PREPARATION

When preparing for professional school interviews, a lot of the same rules apply as with most job interviews. Remember to dress accordingly to interview etiquette and conduct yourself in a professional manner. On Handshake, you can view the Career Center's "Dress for Success" handouts by clicking on the *Resources* tab. In addition, you want to be sure that you practice ahead of time. "Why do you want to be a pharmacist?" or "Why our program?" are common types of questions that you want to be sure and prepare for. There are different types of interviews for pharmacy school that could include speaking with current pharmacy students, an individual faculty member, a current pharmacist, a panel of interviewers, or attend an orientation process. To become more familiar with interview types and preparation, make an appointment with a pre-professional advisor.

Also, you will want to prepare your own questions to ask. Much like job interviews, you are interviewing the school and program just like they are interviewing you. Finding a good fit is important for you to thrive in a program. Once the interview is over, it is always a good idea to write thank you notes. These can be via email or hand written. Making it to the interview stage is a huge feat, so you want to make sure that you make the best impression!

MAJORING IN SOMETHING OTHER THAN SCIENCE?

You do not need to have a degree in chemistry or another science discipline to go to pharmacy school! This is a misconception that many have about the majority of health professions. Professional programs are seeking out students that will bring a different perspective to their program, and a major other than a STEM field could help you stand out. However, you must consider the required prerequisites that will need to be worked into the curriculum of your chosen major. Also, consider seeking out additional challenging science or medical related courses as electives to make yourself a well-rounded candidate. But be sure to consult with your academic advisor before choosing courses!

View the [AACP's FAQ](#) page for information on **Early Assurance, 0-6, Accelerated PharmD**, and other general information about pharmacy school admissions.

TIMELINE

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| <p>Year 1</p> | <p>Meet with a pre-professional advisor to start building your timeline and to explore options and opportunities available to you.</p> | <p>Use the Learning Center for Supplemental Instruction to maintain a strong GPA from day 1 <i>especially in science courses!</i></p> | <p>Get involved with a student group that will both strengthen your application and apply to your interests.</p> | <p>Explore professional healthcare careers using Focus2 and Occupational Outlook Handbook, as well as attending the Graduate & Professional School Fair.</p> |
| <p>Summer 1</p> | <p><i>*Work with the Career Center to start building your resume or CV to prepare your applications for summer experiences*</i></p> <p>Volunteer at local pharmacies or health centers and keep a journal about your experiences. Other summer experiences could include: research with a faculty member, summer enrichment programs, participate on campus with community science education programs for youth</p> | | | |
| <p>Year 2</p> | <p>Assess academic standing and plans for completing prerequisite courses with Academic Advisor.</p> | <p>Identify and connect with faculty for mentorship, research opportunities, and professional advice.</p> | <p>Seek out campus leadership opportunities and community involvement. Be strategic in choosing settings that could make you a competitive candidate.</p> | <p>Continue gaining experience in your field as mentioned above. Attend the Graduate & Professional School Fair to continue growing your network and knowledge of programs available.</p> |
| <p>Summer 2</p> | <p><i>*Work with a pre-professional advisor to begin looking at schools/programs of interest and choose several*</i></p> <p>Start familiarizing yourself with the PCAT (Pharmacy College Admission Test) and the pharmacy school application process (PharmCAS - Preparing to Apply). Continue to gain meaningful shadowing and volunteer hours, preferably with a licensed pharmacist. Create a budget that will include PCAT, test preparation, and application fees for each program of interest including secondary application fees.</p> | | | |
| <p>Year 3</p> | <p>Begin preparing for the PCAT by registering for a course with companies such as Princeton Review, Kaplan, etc. and choose test date by the start of second semester.</p> | <p>Consider what faculty, advisors, and mentors could potentially write your letters of recommendation and consult with them so that you can include their names on your PharmCAS application.</p> | <p>Keep regular contact with your pre-professional advisor to fine tune your application strategy, schools of interest, personal statement, and create your PharmCAS Account.</p> | <p>Discuss alternatives with your pre-professional advisor in case of needed gap year or change in career plans. Attend the Graduate & Professional School Fair to explore your options.</p> |
| <p>Summer 3</p> | <p>By the end of summer 3, you should have a schedule PCAT test date and be ready to start applying in the fall. Continue involvement, research, and/or meaningful volunteering <i>and</i> shadowing that can be added to your experiences when applying.</p> | | | |
| <p>Year 4</p> | <p>Prepare with the Career Center for different types of interviews with pharmacy schools.</p> | <p>Complete applications in the fall if possible. Check the PharmD School Directory for specific deadlines.</p> | <p>Evaluate acceptance offers and talk with your pre-professional advisor for guidance.</p> | <p>Consider if a gap year would be in your best interest to acquire the needed shadowing or volunteer hours, practical experiences, or prerequisites. If you decide on a gap year, begin preparing to sign up for the PCAT in the upcoming summer.</p> |