

EXPLORING: PHARMACY

Overview

Pharmacists dispense prescription medications to patients and offer expertise in the safe use of prescriptions. They also may conduct health and wellness screenings, provide immunizations, oversee the medications given to patients, and provide advice on healthy lifestyles.

Typical Duties:

- ▶ Fill prescriptions, verifying instructions from physicians on the amounts of medication to give to patients
- ▶ Check whether prescriptions will interact negatively with other drugs or any medical conditions
- ▶ Instruct patients on how and when to take a prescribed medicine and inform them about potential side effects they may experience from taking the medicine
- ▶ Give flu shots and, in most states, other vaccinations
- ▶ Advise patients about general health topics, such as diet, exercise, and managing stress, and on other issues, such as what equipment or supplies would be best to treat a health problem
- ▶ Complete insurance forms and work with insurance companies to ensure that patients get medications
- ▶ Oversee the work of pharmacy technicians and pharmacists in training (interns)
- ▶ Keep records and do other administrative tasks
- ▶ Teach other healthcare practitioners about proper medication therapies for patients

In 2019, the median salary for Pharmacists was \$128,090

Some pharmacists who own their pharmacy or manage a chain pharmacy spend time on business activities, such as inventory management. Pharmacists also must take continuing education courses throughout their career to keep up with the latest advances in pharmacological science. With most drugs, pharmacists use standard dosages from pharmaceutical companies. However, some pharmacists create customized medications by mixing ingredients themselves, a process known as compounding.

Education Programs

There are 143 U.S.-based colleges and schools of pharmacy with accredited from the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education. Programs resulting in a Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D) typically take 4 years to complete.

Typical Application Timeline

Many pharmacy programs have multiple deadline dates or operate on a rolling admissions process.

Admission Requirements: Knowledge and Strategies

Work with your faculty advisor to plan for prerequisite requirements. Start early and consult each institution's individual website for specific requirements!

NOTE: Some pharmacy schools require additional courses such as immunology, genetics, economics, psychology, public speaking and English composition.

start early.
start now.

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Typical Prerequisites May Include:

- ▶ Two semesters of biology with lab
- ▶ Anatomy and Physiology
- ▶ Microbiology
- ▶ Two semesters of General Chemistry with lab
- ▶ Two semesters of Organic Chemistry with lab
- ▶ Biochemistry
- ▶ Calculus and Statistics
- ▶ Two semesters of Physics with lab

Prepare for and take the Pharmacy College Admission Test (PCAT)

- ▶ It is recommended that you take the test at least one year before you want to go to pharmacy school. Most of those who take the PCAT do so after their third year of college.
- ▶ Content tested:
 - ▷ Writing (1 prompt)
 - ▷ Biological Processes (Anatomy, Physiology, General Biology, Microbiology)
 - ▷ Chemical Processes (General Chemistry, Organic, Basic Biochemistry)
 - ▷ Critical Reading (comprehension, analysis, evaluation)
 - ▷ Quantitative Reasoning (Algebra, Statistics, Calculus)

Additional Tips

- ▶ Build Relationships. Create a strong network of pre-health advisors, faculty, peers and professionals. Remember, such connections can open up opportunities for you and letters of recommendation will be required to apply. Some institutions may require a letter from a pharmacist.
- ▶ Admissions is based on holistic review, involving factors beyond PCAT scores and GPA such as:
 - ▷ Exposure to pharmacy, health-related professions
 - ▷ Research experience
 - ▷ Leadership, volunteering, involvement, and service
- ▶ When you submit an application, remember you will do so through a centralized application form: Pharmacy College Application Service (PharmCAS).

Want more information?

Schedule an appointment through [Handshake](#) to meet with **Sara Stasko, Associate Director for Graduate School & Pre-Health Advising**, to learn more and to create plans to meet your goals!

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