

HEALTH PROFESSIONS OFFICE

PHARMACY

A pharmacist dispenses prescription and non-prescription medicines to the public, consults with patients, health practitioners and community groups; monitors and evaluates drug therapy; teaches and conducts research. Their primary responsibility is to ensure the safe, efficacious and cost-effective use of all medications prescribed and/or dispensed and to verify the validity of prescriptions in order to satisfy the provisions of the law. The pharmacist ensures that patients understand the proper use and storage of medications. Employment is expected to be stable through the 1990s with growth centered in chain store pharmacies, ambulatory care centers and HMOs.

There are about 82 schools of pharmacy in the United States. As of 2006, all accredited pharmacy programs award a Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.). There are currently seven pharmacy schools in California (UCSF, UCSD, University of the Pacific, Western University, USC, Loma Linda, and Touro University). While a bachelor degree is not required for entrance, the majority of students accepted to pharmacy programs have earned their bachelor degree. The pharmacy school curriculum consists of study in chemistry, biochemistry, anatomy, and physiology for the first two years. Other courses include pharmacy, pharmaceutical chemistry, pharmacology, biopharmaceutics, pathology, microbiology, and toxicology. The last two years consist of courses in pharmacokinetics, pharmacology, a clinical clerkship, and the study of normal and abnormal behavior. USC also has a five year program that leads to a combined Pharm.D./MBA.

To receive a license to practice, the pharmacist must have a Pharm.D. from an accredited pharmacy program and must pass the state's Pharmacy Board Examination.

There are many fields in which the pharmacist can work – from community pharmacy, including the compounding of medicines and dispensing prescription orders to the general public, to hospital pharmacy, where you work closely with physicians, nurses and patients. The pharmacist can also work in the pharmaceutical industry, producing drugs, chemicals, and prescription specialties. Pharmacists' employers include the US Department of Health Services, the Veteran's Administration, the Food and Drug Administration, or any of the branches of the Armed Forces. The pharmacist may also teach at a school of pharmacy, medicine or dentistry and be involved in biomedical research projects.

Historically most of our students have attended one of the pharmacy schools located in California. Entrance to pharmacy school is becoming increasingly competitive; the average GPA of matriculating students ranges from about a 3.0 to a 3.67 at UCSF. Potential applicants to pharmacy school should check requirements for the individual schools in the current catalogs or in the most recent copy of Pharmacy School Admission Requirements, which is available in PDF format at www.aacp.org.

Applying to Pharmacy School

PharmCAS is a centralized application process that allows students to apply for multiple pharmacy schools with a single application, although not all pharmacy schools participate in PharmCAS. If they do participate, you will send all of your transcripts there as well as your letters of reference. You may begin filing a PharmCAS application in June of the year prior to entering pharmacy school. If a school doesn't participate in PharmCAS, you must ask them for applications and submit them separately. Be aware that application deadlines vary greatly by school. Generally, applications are submitted in the Fall of the year prior to entering pharmacy school.

Required Tests

Many schools of pharmacy (although none in California) require that student applicants take the Pharmacy College Admission Test (PCAT). This national exam is administered three times a year and is designed to measure verbal and quantitative ability, reading comprehension, and biology and chemistry knowledge. Students should confer with the school of pharmacy to which they are interested in applying to ascertain whether the exam is required and when to take it.

Prerequisites for California Schools of Pharmacy

General Chem w/ lab	Chem 1A-B-C + labs
Organic Chem w/ lab	Chem 109A-B-C and Chem 6A-B
Math	Math 3A-B or 34A-B (UCSD prefers Math 3 series)
Physics w/ lab	Phys 6A-B/6AL-BL or Phys 1, 2, 3, 3L
Biology w/ lab	MCDB 1A/AL, 1B, 1BL or EEMB 2L (EEMB 2 & EEMB 3/3L may not act as requirement for admission to pharmacy school; however, it is a prerequisite for some upper division bio courses)
English	Writ 2, 50 (or its equivalent -- English 10; Writing 109)
Social Science	Econ 1 or 2 and Psych 1
Humanities	sufficient units ranging between 9-28 units
Speech	DA 65

***Additional courses that MAY be required (please check the school's admission requirements):

Microbiology	MCDB 131
Biochem	MCDB 108A or MCDB 110 or Chem 142A
Physiology	MCDB 111 or EEMB 154 (if lab required, the course may be taken at SBCC – BIOMD 108)
Anatomy	Not offered at UCSB – course may be taken at SBCC BIOMD 107