

Pursuing a Career as a Pharmacist

Profession 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

There are [many specialty areas in pharmacy](#) that can have you working directly with patients, in research, or in business and management. Check out more information about this career [on the Explore Health Careers webpage](#).

Education Programs

There are 142 U.S.-based colleges and schools of pharmacy accredited from the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education. [View the program list on ACPE's website](#). Programs resulting in a Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D) typically take 4 years to complete.

Admission Requirements: Knowledge and Strategies

Work with your faculty advisor and/or a member of [Kenyon's Health Professions Advising Committee \(HPAC\)](#) to plan for prerequisite requirements. Start early and consult each institution's website for specific requirements. [PharmCAS has a program admission directory](#) that is a great starting point for understanding admission expectations. Common course requirements include: general biology, microbiology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, biochemistry, calculus, statistics, and human physiology. Some programs will require courses such as physics, human anatomy, behavioral science, or public speaking. School requirements vary widely, so focusing on your programs of interest is a

smart planning strategy. Individual schools determine how many prerequisites must be completed prior to applying, with many allowing 1-2 uncompleted classes at the time of application.

Pharmacy colleges encourage or require applicants to have volunteer or paid experience working with patients in a pharmacy or health-related setting (hospital, nursing home, etc.).

When you submit an application, remember you will do so through a centralized application site: Pharmacy's Centralized Application Service, [PharmCAS](#). PharmCAS generally opens in July of each year, and early applications are recommended as schools operate on a rolling admissions cycle.

Standardized Tests

While the majority of programs have shifted to a no-test policy, some may still consider the GRE or MCAT, though this is rare. The PCAT was discontinued in 2024 and no longer plays a part in the admissions process. Check out the [standardized test page on PharmCAS](#) for more insights into individual program requirements.

General Advising Information

- **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. Providing three letters of recommendation is common, with many pharmacy programs seeking letters from science professors or pharmacists.
- **Plan financially:** Costs of attending individual programs also vary widely. Visit the [Financial Resources page on Pharmacy is Right For Me](#) for help developing a financial plan for pharmacy school.

Want more information?

Make an appointment with Sara Stasko in the CDO via [Handshake](#) or email stasko1@kenyon.edu. Connect with a faculty advisor on the [Health Professions Advising Committee \(HPAC\)](#).