Pharmacy School Fact Sheet

What degree can I earn?
PharmD. = Doctor of Pharmacy

What is the nature of this profession?
Pharmacists dispense drugs prescribed by physicians and other health practitioners and provide information to patients about medications and their use. Pharmacists work in independently owned pharmacies, pharmacies affiliated with supermarkets or department stores, hospitals, research clinics, pharmaceutical companies, and government agencies. Work hours vary depending on place of employment, though many will work evening and weekend shifts. Pharmacists are all now certified immunizers.

Where can I find additional information about Pharmacy?
The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy www.aacp.org/pharmacycareers (*Like* them on Facebook and Follow them on Twitter @AACPharmacy)

YOU CAN CHOOSE ANY MAJOR YOU WOULD LIKE AS LONG AS YOU FULFILL THE PREREQUISITES FOR PHARMACY SCHOOL.

The following courses are strongly recommended as preparation for the PCAT and Pharmacy School:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIO 120: General Biology I</td>
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<td>BIO 121: General Biology II</td>
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<td>BMS 208: Human Anatomy</td>
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<td>BMS 309: Laboratory in Human Anatomy (Cadaver)</td>
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<td>BMS 212/213: Introductory Microbiology w/lab</td>
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<td>BMS 290/291: Human Physiology w/lab</td>
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<td>PHY 220: General Physics I or PHY 230 (calc-based)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHY 221: General Physics II or PHY 231 (calc-based)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHM 115: Principles of Chemistry I</td>
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<td>CHM 116: Principles of Chemistry II</td>
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<td>CHM 241: Organic Chem for Life Sciences I</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHM 242: Organic Chem for Life Sciences II</td>
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<td>CHM 461: Biochemistry I</td>
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<td>PSY 101: Introductory Psychology</td>
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<td>MTH 201: Calculus I (this varies by school)</td>
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Other suggested courses (some schools require): BMS 310, BIO 355 or 375/376, STA 215, ECO 210 or 211, COM 201, other social science classes.

Some pharmacy schools do not accept AP credit for prerequisite courses. If they do, your AP credit may be applied differently than it was at GVSU. Due to variations in admission requirements and procedures, it is advisable to research different pharmacy programs. Visit the pharmacy school websites for requirements. School specific information is also available on the PharmCAS site. See your faculty advisor or an advisor in the CLAS Academic Advising Center for assistance in choosing elective courses.

A C or better grade is typically required for prerequisite courses.

### PCAT

You will need to take The Pharmacy College Admissions Test (PCAT). Traditionally, applicants plan to take the exam one year before starting pharmacy school. The PCAT test includes sections on Writing, Verbal Ability, Biology, Chemistry, Reading Comprehension, and Quantitative Ability. The PCAT is scored from 200-600; you will also receive a percentile ranking.

The national PCAT average for applicants accepted to pharmacy school fluctuates minimally from year to year. Recently reported average PCAT: 54th percentile.

### GPA

To gain entrance to pharmacy school, usually a minimum cumulative collegiate GPA above 3.0 is required. All attempts of each course are counted in GPA calculations if a student has repeated courses. Pharmacy schools look at a variety of GPA calculations in addition to the overall GPA; including the science GPA, non-science GPA, GPA trends, and GPA in specific subjects.

The national GPA averages for applicants accepted to pharmacy school fluctuate minimally from year to year. Recently reported are:

Cumulative GPA: 3.36, Average science GPA: 3.23. For PharmD schools in Michigan in recent years, the average was 3.50-3.60.
What do I need to do to be a competitive applicant to pharmacy school?

Besides a strong GPA and PCAT score, pharmacy schools look for the following:

- **Pharmacy related Clinical Volunteer/Work Experience** and/or other Health Care experience
  - See [http://www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising/preprofessional](http://www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising/preprofessional) for a list of pharmacists in the area
- **Extracurricular and Leadership Activities** [www.orgsync.com](http://www.orgsync.com) – visit [www.gvsu.edu/studentorg](http://www.gvsu.edu/studentorg) to begin searching for organizations to join at GVSU!
  - Pre-Pharmacy Club; other clubs of interest
- **Community service** [www.gvsu.edu/service](http://www.gvsu.edu/service) (subscribe to their newsletter for frequent event updates)
- **Strong letters of recommendation** typically from faculty and a pharmacist
- Your ability to pass a [criminal background check](http://www.gvsu.edu/service) (CBC). Pharmacy schools will conduct a CBC before allowing admitted students to begin pharmacy school.

The Medical and Health Humanities Certificate, Certificate in Intercultural Training, and the Research Scholar Designation are great ways to attain competencies professional schools are looking for in applicants.

**Keep a journal** of your experiences so you have accurate records for your application; you can use the “Service Tracker” at [www.gvsu.edu/service](http://www.gvsu.edu/service) if you’d like. Include dates, hours, supervisors, and what you took away from the experience. This can also include awards and honors. Remember that while participating in various activities, you are a GVSU ambassador and should act professionally. At all times and in all ways, make sure that you are proud to be a Laker and appropriately represent GVSU for both yourself and your fellow Lakers who will follow after you.

**Want more information?**

- Discuss other options and interests with your faculty advisor and/or CLAS Academic Advisor. To schedule an appointment with a Pre-Pharmacy Advisor in the CLAS Academic Advising Center, visit [www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising](http://www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising) and click on “Schedule Appointment.”
- Plan to also attend events sponsored by the CLAS Academic Advising Center (workshops in Writing Personal Statements, the Application Process, getting Health Care Experience, etc.) to assist you through this process while at GVSU. Log on to your Blackboard site and click on CLAS Academic Advising Center under My Organizations.
- Check out summer programs like the Summer Health Professions Education Program: [www.shpep.org](http://www.shpep.org)
- Subscribe to the Pre-Pharmacy google group to receive helpful information while you are at GVSU. To join follow the instructions below:
  1. Sign into your GVSU student e-mail
  2. Send message to “prepharmacy+subscribe@mail.gvsu.edu” > leave everything else blank
  3. Look for message in GVSU student e-mail with subject “Join request for prepharmacy”
  4. Open the “Join request email” and click the blue “Join This Group” button
    - If adding from a mobile device you must click desktop version in the footer after clicking “Join This Group”
  5. Welcome message will appear confirming you have been added to the group. Be sure to click on Join this Group button after reviewing group information.

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<th>Sample Pharmacy School Curriculum</th>
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| **Year 1** | Instruction in: biochemistry, pathophysiology, pharmaceutics, non-sterile compounding; over-the-counter/herbal medications  
Clinical skills/experiential (community pharmacy setting) |
| **Year 2** | Instruction in: pharmacology; how drugs are put together, medicinal chemistry, infectious disease  
Experiential (hospital) |
| **Years 3 & 4** | Clinicals/Rotations: community pharmacy, hospital, patient rounds, clinic setting; electives  
Instruction in: therapeutics; patient counseling |