

PRE-PHARMACY FACT SHEET

Becoming a Competitive Applicant to Pharmacy School

Applicants to pharmacy programs must complete a minimum of 63 credit hours (2 years) of college coursework, along with the pre-pharmacy prerequisites. Some pre-pharmacy students complete a Bachelor's degree prior to entering a pharmacy program. Competitive applicants for admission have a solid academic record, a well-rounded profile of co-curricular experiences, supportive letters of recommendation, and can clearly articulate their reasons for choosing pharmacy.

SELECTING A MAJOR

Although a Bachelor's degree is not required for admission to pharmacy school, students should always be on track towards a degree. Applicants with a well-rounded education, a variety of interests and personal experiences are ideal candidates and are encouraged to choose a major where they can demonstrate strong academic performance while pursuing a parallel plan. Pharmacy schools look for students who demonstrate a strong ability to handle a rigorous course load.

GPA

GPA's calculated on pharmacy school applications normally include coursework done at all colleges attended. If a course is repeated, both grades will be included in the GPA's calculated by the pharmacy schools.

Aim for GPA's of 3.0 or higher.

GRADES

C is an honorable grade, though most if not all grades should be higher! Multiple grades below B, especially within the two academic years leading up to pharmacy school application, could interfere with admission to pharmacy programs. Faced with a likely grade below C, some students should withdraw (W) and later try for a higher grade; consult with your advisors as you decide. More than two W's, however, could indicate a lack of judgment or an inability to handle challenges later in pharmacy school.

PRE-REQUISITE AND RECOMMENDED COURSES

Pre-pharmacy students should complete certain coursework to be prepared for the rigor of a pharmacy program. In addition, students should research schools carefully to be aware of all prerequisite courses and other admissions policies, as prerequisites vary among pharmacy programs. Students are encouraged to meet with a Pre-Health Advisor in their freshman year to develop their timeline for application to pharmacy school.

PRE-REQUISITES

The following are common prerequisites for pharmacy programs. Prerequisites vary among pharmacy programs. Students must carefully research the requirements for pharmacy programs they are considering:

- General Biology I and II with lab – 8 semester hours (BIO 201/205 and 202/206)
- General Chemistry I and II with lab – 8 semester hours (CHM 203-206; CHM 285/286 can substitute for CHM 205/206)
- Organic Chemistry I and II with lab – 8 semester hours (CHM 321-324)
- Human Anatomy – 3 semester hours (PHA 310)
- Calculus – 3 semester hours (MTH 231, MTH 245, or MTH 141)
- Psychology – 3 semester hours (PSY 201)
- Economics – 3 semester hours (ECO 203 or ECO 205)
- English – 6 semester hours (ENG 150; ENG 220 or ENG 221)
- Speech – 3 semester hours (COM 101 + Magis Core Critical Issues course)

Although not required for Creighton School of Pharmacy, a number of pharmacy schools do require courses in Biochemistry, Physics, Statistics, and Physiology. In addition to the prerequisites listed above, Creighton School of Pharmacy requires that Creighton applicants have six hours of Theology courses. Some schools may not regard credit earned through examinations (AP, CLEP, IB) as being equivalent to completing required courses, but they may accept higher-level college courses as substitutes. Research individual schools for their policies regarding AP/CLEP/IB credits for prerequisite courses.



PRE-HEALTH GUIDES AND RESOURCES

EDGE PRE-HEALTH ADVISING: Pre-Health Advisors in the EDGE are available to meet with students one-on-one about their pre-health goals and path.

EDGE PRE-HEALTH SEMINARS: The EDGE seminars assist students in exploring the pharmacy profession, gaining experience in healthcare, and preparing for the application process. Students should participate in PRX 100 in their freshman year, and then PRX 200 in the sophomore year (depending upon the student's application timeline).

PRE-HEALTH LISTSERV: Subscribe at: <http://lists.creighton.edu/mailman/listinfo>

PRE-PHARMACY CLUB: All pre-pharmacy students should participate in the Pre-Pharmacy Club. This student-run organization provides leadership opportunities to further explore and gain experience in the pharmacy profession - <https://creighton.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/prepharmacyclub>

CU SCHOOL OF PHARMACY AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS (SPAHP): Make an appointment with SPAHP admissions office personnel in the spring of the freshman year to personalize the application process.

PRE-HEALTH LISTSERV: Subscribe at: <http://lists.creighton.edu/mailman/listinfo>

HELPFUL LINKS:
creighton.edu/edge - Creighton EDGE
Creighton School of Pharmacy and Health Professions: <https://spahp.creighton.edu/>
Pharmacy is Right for Me: <https://pharmacyforme.org/>

Course Scheduling Considerations: Freshmen and sophomore pre-pharmacy students usually take two natural science or math subjects each semester.

Chemistry: General Chemistry I (CHM 203/204) and General Chemistry II (CHM 205/206) are typical choices for freshman fall and spring. Students must have a sufficient chemistry background (completion of high school chemistry) and sufficient math background (an ACT math score of at least 24 or an SAT math score of at least 580) to be eligible take General Chemistry in the freshman year. Students may instead take additional math and/or CHM 105 Introductory Chemistry in freshman year to be better prepared for General Chemistry.

Biology: General Biology I (BIO 201/205) and General Biology II (BIO 202/206) are typical choices for freshman fall and spring, respectively. Completion of either General Chemistry I (CHM 203) or Introductory Chemistry (CHM 105) is required in order to take General Biology II.

Math: Pre-pharmacy students are required to complete a calculus course. MTH 231 or MTH 245 will fulfill this requirement. In addition, MTH 141 is acceptable for pre-pharmacy students who are pursuing a business degree. Math, physics, and chemistry majors will need more than one semester of calculus and usually should not take MTH 231.

PHARMACY APPLICATION PROCESS:

NATIONAL ADMISSION TESTS: Some pharmacy programs require the Pharmacy College Admission Test (PCAT) a national, standardized computer-based test. The PCAT is typically taken approximately 9-12 months before starting pharmacy school. To do well on this exam, students need to allow for significant study and preparation before the exam. In addition, certain science courses should be completed prior to taking the PCAT. The PCAT is not required for Creighton School of Pharmacy.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION: Pharmacy programs often require between two and four letters of recommendation with their application. Many pharmacy schools require at least one or two letters from professors. Some schools may require that one letter be from a practicing pharmacist. Students are encouraged to research letter requirements by school.

INTERVIEWS: Many pharmacy schools will interview promising applicants. The Career Center offers interview preparation assistance, including mock interviews.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: Some pharmacy schools might offer special consideration to applicants from socioeconomic groups underrepresented in the profession.

Physics: Students who have sufficient math and physics (a year of high school physics or a semester of college introductory physics such as our PHY 187; math through pre-calculus) are eligible to take General Physics I (PHY 201/205) and General Physics II (PHY 202/206). Prospective math, physics, and chemistry majors may take alternate sections of General Physics and additional math.

Summer: Science courses may be taken in the summer by pre-pharmacy students, but only when there are good reasons for doing so (not just a vague desire to “catch up”) and not at community colleges. Speak with a pre-health advisor about timelines!

Sample First Semester Schedule: Course sequencing may vary depending upon a student's readiness.

- General Biology I with lab (4 sem. hours)
- General Chemistry I with lab (4 sem. hours) or Introductory Chemistry (3 sem. hours)
- Magis Core Class (3 or 4 sem. hours) – ENG or Critical Issues + COM
- Magis Core Class (3 sem. hours) – PHL or THL
- Maybe another Magis Core Class (3 sem. hours) – PSY, foreign language
- RSP Class (.5 semester hours each freshman semester)

CO-CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS

Good grades and strong PCAT scores are not enough to get you into pharmacy school. It is important that you are a well-rounded applicant who participates in meaningful activities on your college campus and your community. Pharmacy is a service-focused profession and admissions officers look for students who demonstrate their promise to serve the community throughout their lifetimes. Additionally, pharmacy schools expect students will shadow professionals and also value skills gained from leadership, research, and building relationships that can demonstrate readiness for pharmacy school.

VOLUNTEER AND SERVICE

Students must have service experiences in both healthcare and non-healthcare settings, and it is beneficial to show sustained commitment over time. Check out the Schelgel Center for Service and Justice for opportunities - <http://blogs.creighton.edu/ccsj/>

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Pharmacists are called on to connect with and help people different from themselves, and make their patients feel comfortable during treatment. Seek out experiences that help you build interpersonal relationships and interact with people from many walks of life.

SHADOWING

Students must gain knowledge of the profession by shadowing current professionals in their field. It is highly recommended that students shadow pharmacists in a variety of settings, if possible.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership comes in many forms. Creighton has a number of resources to help you gain leadership experience through various organizations and student programming. Showing some leadership skills now demonstrates you can be a leader in your community later.

HEALTHCARE EXPERIENCE

Students should seek opportunities for hands-on, direct patient care experience, whether volunteer, paid, or both. Some specific ways students gain this employment is through becoming a Pharmacy Technician, PT/OT tech or aide, Certified Nurse Aide (CNA), an EMT with Basic certification, a phlebotomist, an eeg/ekg tech, patient care tech, home health aide, or medication aide, among others.

RESEARCH

Research experience is not a requirement for admission to pharmacy school, but may add an extra layer to your application if the institutions you are applying to have a research focus, or if you are particularly interested in research. See the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship for opportunities at <http://www.creighton.edu/curas/>.