



Getting Into Pharmacy School

1. **Major in ANYTHING.** Majoring in science will make completing prerequisites easier, but choose a major that peaks your interest and that will be useful post-graduation (especially if you take a year off before starting pharmacy school). Picking a major outside of science can also set you apart from the majority.
2. **Take the required pre-pharmacy courses**, with the most common including: general chemistry, organic chemistry, biology, physiology, microbiology, statistics, calculus, public speaking, economics, sociology, and english.
3. **The best time to take the PCAT** is the summer between junior and senior year of your college years.. Take all the subjects that will be on the PCAT your junior year to make studying easier. Some pharmacy schools have removed the PCAT requirement, know which schools require it and which schools made it optional.
4. **Study for the PCAT 2-3 months before your exam.** Take as many practice tests as you can and make sure you understand why your answers are right or wrong. I used the Kaplan PCAT Prep-Plus book and purchased practice exams from Pearson PCAT, which gave a good idea what the real exam would look and feel like.
5. **Apply early!** The PharmCas application opens in July. The earlier you apply, the better your chances are of getting into a school as many, not all, do rolling admissions.
6. **Talk to at least one pharmacist.** Ask them questions like why they chose pharmacy, what characteristics are important for being a pharmacist, etc. Having a mentor in the field will give you the inside scoop in understanding what a pharmacist really does.
7. **Volunteer or get a job in the field.** While in undergrad, consider applying to jobs like: pharmacy clerk, pharmacy technician, or medical scribe. These can help you decide if pharmacy is the right path for you and to help you understand the pharmacist's role on the patient care team. Also, look out for healthcare volunteer opportunities through your school (UC Davis Health has a program allowing undergraduate volunteers to intern in different hospital departments).
8. **Be a leader!** Demonstrate leadership in an existing organization or start one. You don't have to be involved in healthcare-related organizations. Remember that being a part of non-healthcare related student organizations and taking on leadership positions in those makes you even more unique and sets you apart from the rest of the candidates.
9. **Attend a pre-health conference!** Two specific ones that happen annually: the UC Davis pre-health conference as well as Stanford pre-health conference called SUMMA. Pharmacy schools from all over the country come to these conferences - it's your chance to get your face and name known and to build that connection!
10. **Talk to at least 3 people** who have successfully gotten into pharmacy school. Building a connection with current students will help guide you in the application process as they know and understand the process the best.

"As you navigate college and post-grad, it's not about what experiences you have, but about what you learned from those experiences and the transferable skills that can be used when working as a pharmacist. Also, what sets you apart from the rest of the applicants? What makes YOU different? Keep this in mind as you weave through

undergrad and pharmacy school applications.”

— *Rafal Saeed, Santa Clara, CA; UC San Francisco School of Pharmacy Class of 2022, UC Davis Class of 2018, Santa Clara High School Class of 2014*