

Pharmacy

What is Pharmacy?

Pharmacy is the science and technique of preparing and dispensing drugs. It is a health profession that links health sciences with chemical sciences and aims to ensure the safe and effective use of pharmaceutical drugs.

The scope of pharmacy practice includes more traditional tasks such as compounding and dispensing medications, and it also includes more modern services related to health care, including administering clinical services, reviewing medications for safety and efficacy, and providing drug information. Pharmacists are the experts on drug therapy.

What are the common academic requirements for Pharmacy?

- Minimum of two years of University with a GPA of 3.5 (A-).
- Specific course requirements can include general Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Physical Chemistry, Biochemistry, Physics, English, Humanities/Social Sciences, Biology, Human Physiology, Statistics, and Calculus.
- Most universities outside Ontario allot a high percentage (ranging from 75 to 99%) of their program spaces to their provincial applicants. Entry requirements for students from outside the province are significantly higher.

Where can I study pharmacy?

There are 2 pharmacy schools in Ontario:

- University of Toronto - www.pharmacy.utoronto.ca
- University of Waterloo - <http://uwaterloo.ca/pharmacy>

Be sure to visit each university's website for more information on their program and specific admission requirements.

Visit the Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs for a list of Canadian-accredited Faculties of Pharmacy (Links are on pg. 2).

How do I apply?

Visit each school's website to learn about their application processes and register for an account.

Applications are typically due at the beginning of January every application year.

Looking for Related Experience?

Review the *Volunteering and Internships* tip sheets, attend a *Work Search Strategies* workshop or speak with a Career Counsellor or Career Strategist.

Start Early!

Pharmacy schools require a high GPA. Many look for demonstrated interest in pharmacy on your application.

Improve your GPA:

Visit the AA&CC and the CTL to improve your academic skills.

Cultivate References:

Get to know your professors. Their research is interesting! Professors who know you fairly well are able to write strong reference letters for you.

Get Involved:

Join volunteer and co-curricular activities that demonstrate your skills and ongoing interest in a career in pharmacy.

Typical Application Timeline

Begin 1 year prior to your desired Fall start:

- September – Register for online application account at school(s) of choice
- By early January – Finalize your application and submit all supporting documents
- March – Attend interviews
- April – Admission decisions are made, conditional on academic performance
- June – Submit final transcript to confirm strong academic performance

Application Components

- Autobiographical Sketch
- PCAT Score
- Personal Statement
- References
- Official Transcript(s)

Pharmacy Admission Test (PCAT)

- Measures general academic ability and scientific knowledge necessary for the commencement of pharmaceutical education
- Includes the following components:
 - Writing
 - Verbal Ability
 - Biology
 - Chemistry
 - Reading Comprehension
 - Quantitative Ability
- Offered 5 times per year – preparation and registration are required in advance

Personal Statement

Admission committees are looking for statements that demonstrate:

- Your interest in pharmacy, future goals and career plans
- Why their school fits your goals and career plans
- What you will contribute to the program in terms of experiences, related knowledge, and personal characteristics
- Your commitment to your community, shown by involvement
- Writing ability

How do I become a Pharmacist in Ontario?

- Earn a pharmacy degree from an accredited institution
- Gain practical experience through an internship/apprenticeship
- Register with the provincial association with the Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs (CCAPP)
- Pass the Pharmacy Qualifying Examination through the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada: www.pebc.ca

Paying for a Pharmacy Program

Annual tuition for Ontario students ranges \$13,000-\$16,000. Remember to ask about scholarships and bursaries! You might also find financial support via tools like www.esdc.gc.ca/en/student_financial_aid/scholarships.page

Where can I find more information and resources?

Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs (CCAPP)

www.ccapp-accredit.ca

Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada

www.pebc.ca

Pharmacy College Admissions Test (PCAT)

pactweb.info

Student Doctor Network

www.studentdoctor.net

Application & Personal Statement Resources

- Effective Admission Letters (U of T Writing Centre):
www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/admission-letters
- Purdue University Online Writing Lab:
owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/642/01/
- CTL's Graduate School Application and Personal Statement Assignment Calculator
ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/assignmentcal

AA&CC Career Development and Employment LibGuides

Following books are available on www.utsc.utoronto.ca/aacc/ebooks

- Letters to a Young Pharmacist: Sage Advice on Life and Career from Extraordinary Pharmacists
- PCAT prep book

The AA&CC can help! Attend the Graduate & Professional Schools Fair (October), go to a *Preparing for Professional & Graduate School* workshop, meet professionals in the field through Extern, or speak with a Career Counsellor to learn how to get relevant experience!

Please note: While this tip sheet aims to ensure accuracy, requirements do change. Consider it a starting point for your further research. Visit individual pharmacy school websites for detailed, up-to-date information about admission requirements and application procedures.