

Pre-Pharmacy Advising at St. Olaf



Getting Started

In the United States, a PharmD, or Doctorate in Pharmacology, is required to practice as a pharmacist. The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (www.AACP.org) is an excellent resource to assist you in deciding whether or not pharmacy school is for you, and if so, guiding you through the application process and beyond. There are about 100 PharmD programs located throughout the nation, most of which are four years in length and many of which have characteristic pre-requisites and recommended undergraduate coursework which vary between different pharmacy schools. If you are entertaining the option of attending pharmacy school, then it is important to survey the requirements for each school and account for them in your academic planning. In general, four years of undergraduate study with a BA degree is preferred by admissions committees.

Recommended Undergraduate Coursework

Below is a list of the recommended St. Olaf courses for students planning on a career in pharmacy.

Course Name	St. Olaf Catalog Equivalent	Required/Recommended
General Biology	Bio 150 with Lab	Required by all/nearly all
General Chemistry	Chem 125 (or 121/123) and 126 with Lab	Required by all/nearly all
Organic Chemistry	Chem 247 and 248 with Lab	Required by all/nearly all
Microbiology	Bio 231 with Lab	Required by all/nearly all
Human Anatomy	Bio 243 with Lab	Required by all/nearly all
Physics	Physics 124 and 125 with Lab	Required by all/nearly all
Calculus	Math 120	Required by all/nearly all
Statistics	Stat 110, 212 or others	Required by all/nearly all
Economics	Economics 121	Required by all/nearly all
Public Speaking	Theatre 120 or other ORC credit	Required by all/nearly all
English Composition	GE 111 and WRI credit	Required by all/nearly all
Psychology	Psych 125 or others	Required by some
Biochemistry	Chem 379	Required by some
Sociology	Soan 121, 128 or others	Required by some
General Biology II	Bio 126 with Lab	Required by some
Microeconomics	Econ 262	Required by some

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Biology	Bio 150 or CH/BI 227
Microbiology	Bio 231
Human Anatomy	Bio 243 or 266
Human Physiology	Bio 243 or 247
Advanced Elective (Bio or BioChem)	Must focus on human body
Math	Math 120
Statistics	Stats 110 or 212
Chemistry	Chem 125 (or 121 and 123) or CH/BI 125
Chemistry	Chem 126 or CH/BI 126
Organic Chemistry (with labs)	Chem 247 and 253 and 248 and 254
Physics (with labs)	Physics 124 or 130
Behavioral Sciences	2 courses (psychology, sociology, cultural studies, economics)
English	GE 111 and WRI course
Public Speaking	ORC

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Internship

While not a written requirement for most pharmacy schools, experience working in a pharmacy before applying is crucial. This could be done by working in a local home-town pharmacy over the summer, or by completing an internship at a pharmacy in Northfield. You should try and arrange an internship during your junior year if possible. Internships can be taken for credit (1.0) while at St. Olaf either during the semester, or as your January Interim course. Students have arranged internships at a variety of local pharmacies. Summer internships can also sometimes be arranged in a pharmacy in your home town. Dr. Beussman and the Piper Center can help you set up an internship.

Preparing for Pharmacy School

Once you've decided that you are committed to pursuing a PharmD, the application process is the next step. In addition to completing some general application materials, admission to any graduate school usually requires taking a standardized test, writing your Curriculum Vitae, requesting letters of recommendation from professors and/or supervisors, and composing a personal statement or answering several essay questions. Pharmacy school is no different.

The entrance exam for pharmacy school is the PCAT. Be sure to register early, since seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. Preparation for this test is a must; practice tests are available online, both in online and paper formats. More information is available through the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (www.aacp.org).

The general application is available through the AACP, and can be found online (www.pharmcas.org). This application compiles a broad range of your personal information, and processes your transcripts, letters of recommendation, and PCAT scores. This primary application can then be submitted to multiple schools. Be aware that there is a fee attached to this process, and that some programs require a Supplemental Application in addition to the PharmCAS primary application. Apply as early as possible, since some schools have a rolling admission policy and will be reviewing applications and accepting students long before the final application deadline arrives. For schools with rolling admission, the earlier you apply, the better chance you may have of being accepted. You should therefore try to take the PCAT exam in June or August before your senior year (or if prepared during January of your junior year).

More information

For more information, please look at <http://wp.stolaf.edu/chemistry/files/2013/07/pre-pharm.pdf> or arrange to speak with Dr. Beussman, RNS 436, beussmad@stolaf.edu