

Prepharmacy at Baylor

What you need to know about how prepharmacy relates to pharmacy school:

- Prepharmacy refers to the courses you need to gain admission to a pharmacy school. These courses typically require four semesters, BUT this requires that you take chemistry and biology **every** semester. Any delay in starting chemistry or biology will mean that you will either require more than two years or that you'll have to go to school in the summer to catch up. Pharmacy school lasts another four years and you earn a PharmD degree.
- A degree is NOT required to be accepted into pharmacy school; about half of pharmacy applicants have a four-year degree but the pharmacy schools say this does not influence admissions.
- There is significant competition to get in. The average GPA of those accepted to pharmacy school is fairly high, around 3.5 or 3.6 at UT Austin and the University of Houston. They receive around seven applicants per person accepted.
- The admission criteria in approximate order of importance are (a) GPA, (b) PCAT score, (c) pharmacy experience, and (d) extracurricular activities that show you to be a "well-rounded" individual.

If you are interested in pharmacy school, you should:

- Take chemistry and biology beginning your first semester. Since the prepharmacy requirements are nearly identical to what a chemistry or biochemistry or biology major would take for the first two years, you have at least a year to decide if you want to get a degree or just go on to pharmacy school. If you decide to try to go directly to pharmacy school, you take the PCAT exam in October of your second year and apply about then too.
- Do as well as possible in your courses, especially the math and science courses. Try not to take math or science courses from a two-year school; the pharmacy schools don't respect courses from community colleges as much as from four-year schools.
- Get your pharm tech certification (see: www.ptcb.org) and get a job in a pharmacy. This (a) looks very good to the pharmacy schools; (b) gets you a recommendation from someone in the field, and probably most importantly, (c) helps you know if this is something you want to do. If commercial pharmacy (putting pills in bottles) begins to bore you, consider other aspects of pharmacy, like hospital pharmacy, or even doing something other than pharmacy school. A chemistry or biochemistry degree, for example, opens the door to a lot of pharmacy-related research. If you decide research excites you, consider going to graduate school in either chemistry, biochemistry or medicinal chemistry.
- Prepare for the PCAT by either attending a review course (warning - this may require traveling to Austin, etc.) or at least getting a study guide. Amazon.com lists several.
- Do some extra-curricular stuff; earlier and longer-term is better than later and short term.
- Apply earlier rather than later! There is no penalty for applying in October, and it might make a significant difference.

There are currently six pharmacy schools in Texas: UT Austin, University of Houston, Texas Tech (in Amarillo), Texas A&M Kingsville, University of the Incarnate Word (San Antonio, private) and Texas Southern (Houston).