

R&E: Navigating PharmCAS

5/6/24

Start time: 8:10 PM

End time: 8:43 PM

What is PharmCAS?

- PharmCAS = **Pharmacy College Application Service**
- Centralized application site for pharmacy schools
- Cycle opens in mid-July
- Website: www.pharmcas.org
- Program list:
 - University of California, San Francisco
 - University of California, San Diego
 - University of California, Irvine
 - University of the Pacific
 - California Health Sciences University
 - Touro University
 - University of Washington
 - Loma Linda
 - Many more!
- Creating an account assigns you a PharmCAS ID#

PharmCAS Application

- Website layout similar to college application (for community colleges + state schools)
- 4 main sections:
 1. Personal information
 2. Academic history
 - High schools attended
 - Colleges attended
 - Transcript entry
 - Standardized tests
 3. Supporting information
 4. Program materials

Transcript Entry

- Must get transcripts from *all* schools you've attended
- Most schools have online services to send transcripts electronically/mail to PharmCAS

- PharmCAS prefers electronic transcripts
- Will get notified once transcripts have been received
 - Takes a few weeks to verify grades are entered correctly
 - NOTE: PharmCAS will NOT notify you about missing transcripts
- Ordering transcripts
 - UCD uses [Parchment](#) for ordering official transcripts
- Tips for transcript entry
 - Double check entries (e.g. BIS2A = BIOLSCI002A on PharmCAS)
 - Make sure to input in-progress courses + planned courses

Letters of Recommendation (Evaluations)

- Select “yes’ or “no” on “I waive my right to access this evaluation”
 - Many recommenders prefer to select yes so that they can give an unbiased letter
- PharmCAS accepts up to 4 letters per applicant
 - Number of letters required varies across programs
- Tip: give letter writers a deadline of at least 2-3 weeks before deadline
 - Ensures that letter will be submitted on time
- **Tips**
 - Who do I ask? Anyone who can write a strong letter speaking to your character
 - Professional ,pharmacist, research advisor, supervisor, etc
 - How do I build relationships?
 - Office hours, getting involved, being open-minded
 - When do I ask?
 - Earlier the better! Make sure writers have enough time to write
 - Most ppl ask the winter or spring quarter before applying during the summer
 - How do I reach out? In person, email
 - Email format
 - Greeting
 - Introduce yourself (remind professor what class you were in)
 - Say what you learned from class, organization, event, etc & how you grew as a person
 - Introduce plans for applying to pharmacy school & how you would appreciate it if they could write you a LOR because they know your ____ best
 - Mention deadline; express understanding if writer can’t write letter
 - Closing remarks

- Note: might have to provide writer with personal statement, resume, or answer specific questions they ask

Submitting an Evaluation Request

- **Process**
 - Enter evaluator's full name + email address
 - Select date by which you would like evaluation completed
 - Evaluators will receive email from PharmCAS with login
- Evaluation form includes:
 - Evaluator information (personal info + relationship to you)
 - Ratings (they rate your skills on a scale)
 - Overall recommendation concerning admission
 - Document upload (upload actual letter of rec)
 - More details can be found on PharmCAS website!

Experiences

- Add all extracurricular activities here!
- Includes: job, internship, community service, achievements, licenses/certificates
 - Achievements = honors, publications, scholarships
 - Licenses certificates = professional licenses/certifications
 - E.g pharmacy technician, EMT
- Information needed: supervisor, dates, description (500 characters)

Personal Essay

- Approx a page long (4500 characters with spaces)
- Keep essay general because it will be sent to all programs you applied to
 - Don't mention a specific program's name!

Your Personal Essay should address why you selected pharmacy as a career and how the Doctor of Pharmacy degree relates to your immediate and long-term professional goals. Describe how your personal, educational, and professional background will help you achieve your goals. The personal essay is an important part of your application for admission and provides you with an opportunity for you to clearly and effectively express your ideas.

Program Materials

- Each school has different:
 - Essay questions
 - Document submissions
 - Evidence of practicing hours
 - Supporting authentication

Application Fees

- Depends on # of programs you apply to
 - \$175 for first application and + \$55 for each additional program
- NOTE: there are a limited amount of fee waivers
- Schools may also have a supplemental application fee (e.g. UCSF = \$80)
 - Can look up on PharmCAS before actually applying

General Tips

- Start early to have more time to prepare
- Ask for advice on essay (e.g. HPA advising)
- Have patience (especially with transcript entry)
- Write down all important dates (schools have different deadlines)
- Know each school's application style
 - Rolling (USC, most schools)
 - Tired (UOP)
 - Non-rolling (UCSD, UCSF)
- Prioritize what applications you work on first (some schools have more supplemental questions than others)
- Block off interview dates for pharmacy schools
- Reach out to HPA or pharmacy students for advice
- Take advantage of early decision if you are set on one school
- Proofread app before submitting
- Practice interview questions
 - Make sure you create a list of questions to ask school too
- Check your email for updates on PharmCAS (e.g. evaluation submissions, deadlines, etc)

Timeline

- **Freshman - senior year**
 - Build relationships with professors, faculty, supervisors
 - Gain experiences and write them down
 - Update CV/resume

- **Junior/senior year**
 - Draft + revise personal statement
 - Work on PharmCAS app when it opens in July

Q&A Session

1. When did you make the account on PharmCAS?

- Before application opened in July (wanted to navigate the system)
- Can create an account right now but you can't start the application yet
- Can apply to programs you're interested in and see their supplemental questions
 - NOTE: supplemental questions may be different for next cycle

2. If you are applying early to one program, do you have to complete the PharmCAS app by the early deadline?

- Yes, once you submit the PharmCAS application to one program, you can no longer make changes to your transcript, experiences, personal essay, etc
 - Can only make changes to the supplemental questions specific to different programs + add new experiences
- If applying early to one program, make sure that you're happy with your personal statement because you cannot make any additional changes once you've submitted it

3. What was the hardest part of PharmCAS?

- Transcript entry
- Have to manually input all the classes and grades you've taken since high school
 - Includes classes you received AP credit + classes taken at CCs
- Very tedious (requires course code, course name, # of credits, grade you got)

4. When did you start inputting the transcripts/courses and how long did that take you?

- Started inputting the transcript right when I started the application (knew it would take long)
- Took around a day (had to check to make sure all courses were entered correctly)

5. Can you apply to schools without having taken prerequisite courses (e.g. physics, NPB) and enter them as classes we are going to take?

- Yes, you can still apply as long as you finish the prerequisites before you enter pharmacy school (typically July of the year you start)

6. Is there a limit to the number of activities/honors you can enter?

- No limit to the number of activities/honors you enter but I recommend inputting extracurriculars that you believe are important and particular relevant (if any) to pharmacy
- PharmCAS recommends focusing on experiences during past 10 years that are at the collegiate level or above