

About the Test

The PCAT is a specialized test that helps identify qualified applicants to pharmacy colleges by measuring general academic ability and scientific knowledge necessary for the commencement of pharmaceutical education.

Test Development

- PCAT is constructed specifically for colleges of pharmacy.
- The design and contents of the PCAT are determined by the types of abilities, aptitudes, and skills deemed essential by colleges of pharmacy and by research concerning the kinds of tests that most accurately predict success in science oriented courses.
- Periodic reviews of the test contents are conducted with deans, faculty, and administrators from schools of pharmacy to ensure that the test items reflect current pharmacy curriculum requirements.

Test Contents

- The PCAT consists of 240 multiple-choice items and two Writing topics.
- Multiple-choice items consist of a question or incomplete statement followed by four answer choices, only one of which is correct. The answer to each item can be determined independently of the answers to any other item.
- The test is divided into separate sections, or subtests, each of which is timed separately.
- You have approximately 4 hours to complete the test (plus administrative time for instructions and time for a short rest break about halfway through the test).
- During the time allowed for each subtest, you will be permitted to work only on that section.
- You will not be allowed to go back to earlier subtests or proceed to later ones. **Failure to follow this rule is one of the main reasons candidates have their scores cancelled.**

There are six content areas measured by the PCAT in seven separate subtests:

- The **Verbal Ability** subtest measures general, non-scientific word knowledge and usage using analogies and sentence completion. There are 48 questions in this section.
- The **Biology** subtest measures knowledge of the principles and concepts of basic biology, including general biology, microbiology, and human anatomy and physiology. There are 48 questions in this section.
- The **Chemistry** subtest measures knowledge of principles and concepts of inorganic and elementary organic chemistry. There are 48 questions in this section.
- The **Reading Comprehension** section measures ability to comprehend, analyze, and evaluate reading passages on science-related topics. There are 6 passages and 48 questions in this section.
- The **Quantitative Ability** subtest measures skills in mathematical processes and the ability to reason through and understand quantitative concepts and relationships, including applications of basic math, algebra, probability and statistics, precalculus, and calculus. There are 48 questions in this section.
- Two **Writing** subtests measure the effective use of language conventions and the ability to suggest the solution to a problem in written essays. There is one essay topic in each of two sections that requires you to write a problem-solving essay.

Experimental Items

- Of the 48 items in each of the five multiple-choice subtests, 40 are core items that count towards your score and eight are experimental items.
- The experimental multiple-choice items are embedded within the five multiple-choice subtests. One of the two writing subtests is also experimental.
- Experimental items and essay topics are being tested for future use on PCAT test forms and will **not** affect your score.
- Because you will not know which items and essay topic are experimental and which count toward your score, it is very important that you do your best on all the items and sections of the test.

Test Blueprint

The following table lists the contents and the time allowed for each of the seven subtests in the order that they appear on the PCAT. The listed percentages of item types and content areas included in each multiple-choice subtest are approximate and may vary slightly from test form to test form.

PCAT Subtests	Number of Test Items and Approximate Percent of Item Types or Content Areas in Each Subtest
1. Writing (30 Minutes)	1 Writing Topic
Conventions of Language	
Problem Solving	
2. Verbal Ability (30 Minutes)	48 Items
Analogies	60%
Sentence Completion	40%
3. Biology (30 Minutes)	48 Items
General Biology	60%
Microbiology	20%
Anatomy & Physiology	20%
4. Chemistry (30 Minutes)	48 Items
General Chemistry	60%
Organic Chemistry	40%
Rest Break	
5. Writing (30 Minutes)	1 Writing Topic
Conventions of Language	
Problem Solving	
6. Reading Comprehension (50 Minutes)	6 Passages & 48 Items
Comprehension	30%
Analysis	40%
Evaluation	30%
7. Quantitative Ability (40 Minutes)	48 Items
Basic Math	15%
Algebra	20%
Probability & Statistics	20%
Precalculus	22%
Calculus	22%

Test-Taking Strategies

The following strategies are suggested to help you do your best on the PCAT:

- Familiarize yourself with the test by reviewing test content descriptions and with the sample items and Practice Tests available at the PCAT website. Pearson does not endorse or recommend any other commercially available test preparation materials.
- Be prepared physically and mentally by getting a good night's sleep, eating what you consider a normal meal the morning of the test, and dressing comfortably.
- The heating or air conditioning systems may not be under the control of the Test Center staff, so dress in a manner that will allow you to adapt to different room temperatures.
- Allow plenty of time to get to your Test Center.
- Answer as many multiple-choice items as time allows. Your scores are based on the number of items you answer correctly. Points are not deducted for incorrect responses. If you are not sure which answer choice is correct for an item, eliminate as many incorrect options as you can first. If you have doubts about an answer to an item, change your answer only if you have a valid reason.
- Do not dwell on items that are unfamiliar or difficult, since all the multiple-choice items count the same. In each of the five multiple-choice subtests, first answer items about which you are confident, and then return to answer the more difficult items, if time permits.
- Work quickly but carefully and check regularly to make sure you are marking your answers in the correct places on the Answer Booklet.
- For the Writing sections, take a few moments to first plan your essay on the page provided, and allow yourself time to proofread your essay carefully when finished.
- Go to the PCAT website for sample test items and correct answers.