



NEWS

From Harcourt Assessment, Inc.

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**PHARMACY COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TEST UPDATED
WITH NEW WRITING COMPONENT**

**Essay Reflects Changing Role of Pharmacists and
Need for Excellent Communication Skills**

SAN ANTONIO — Leading test publisher Harcourt Assessment, Inc., and the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP), today announced that a writing component has been added to the Pharmacy College Admissions Test (PCAT). The expanded test reflects the changing role of pharmacists in the United States and helps ensure that new pharmacists will possess the communication skills needed to be effective health advisors. The writing test will be introduced in June 2005.

“The role of the pharmacist has evolved, so it is important that our test evolve, too,” said Gene Bowles, Harcourt Assessment’s vice president of operations and technology. “In the past, pharmacists focused on drug distribution, but today’s pharmacists are drug therapy managers and health advisors who need excellent communication skills. The new PCAT writing component is designed to measure those skills.”

As of fall 2001, pharmacy colleges no longer offer a bachelor’s of science degree in pharmacy. The doctor of pharmacy degree (Pharm.D.) is now the sole professional degree. Graduates are required to have competency in three areas, including public health. In addition to mastering the scientific knowledge that is the basis for the practice of modern pharmacy, graduates are also required to demonstrate outstanding verbal and communications skills.

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“The growing interest in pharmacy, as reflected in the surge of applicants to pharmacy schools, means that schools need additional tools to assess potential students,” said Lucinda L. Maine, Ph.D., executive vice president of AACP. “The essay is a timely and an important addition to the PCAT.”

The PCAT, first introduced in 1974, is the premier examination for people applying to pharmacy schools. Consisting of approximately 280 multiple-choice questions, plus the new writing component, the PCAT is a product of Harcourt Assessment and endorsed by AACP. The PCAT is used currently by 59 of the nation’s 89 pharmacy colleges. More than 98 percent of applicants register online to take the PCAT at pcatweb.info.

Examinees will have 30 minutes to write an argumentative essay in response to a statement that expresses an opinion, or to write a problem-solving essay in response to a statement that expresses a problem. Trained readers will evaluate each essay and assign a score ranging from one to five. To score a five, the writer must demonstrate command of the conventions of the English language; make very few, if any, mistakes in sentence formation, usage and mechanics; and show evidence of advanced or innovative techniques. To ensure the consistency of the scores, a supervisor will also read and score 10 percent of the essays.

Harcourt Assessment, Inc. is the oldest commercial test publisher in the nation. In addition to the PCAT, it also publishes the Miller Analogies Test, a standardized examination used for graduate school applications.

The company is a leading provider of high-quality assessment instruments and testing programs used by educators, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists and businesses. Harcourt Assessment is affiliated with the Harcourt book publishing companies, and together they form the global education brand of Reed Elsevier Group plc (NYSE: RUK and ENL) — a world-leading publisher and information provider operating in the science and medical, legal, education and business-to-business industry sectors.

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The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy is a national organization whose mission is to serve its member colleges, schools and their faculties by acting as their advocate on a national level. The Association is committed to education and scholarship for improving drug therapy.

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