

Parents' Guide to Prehealth Studies At Purdue

Health Professions Advising Purdue University

Congratulations on helping your son/daughter gain acceptance in one of the country's finest universities—Purdue. Your student's success was in no small part due to your support, persistence, and caring. As a student, your child is now in charge of making decisions that affect his/her education and future. This guide will help you understand a bit more about what it takes to be admitted in a professional program after graduation from Purdue so that you can support your student in his/her efforts.

- A major should be chosen based on the interests of the student. **Prehealth is a vocational interest—not a major.** Professional schools have no preference for major but do generally identify key classes (prerequisites) that students must have.
- Good grades will be required. For most professional programs a 3.0 is the minimum. Realistically though, to be competitive in many programs you need a 3.6 to a 3.8 GPA.
- Students need to shadow someone in their chosen profession. You may be able to help with this by helping them contact people you know in those fields.
- Students need to be involved in campus activities and community volunteering to gain leadership experience and to show that they are service oriented.
- Summer research and study abroad are great opportunities, but they may also have financial aspects that you will need to plan for.
- Encourage your student to get to know faculty, seek help with classes, and generally make the most of their time at Purdue.
- At Purdue your student has both an academic advisor to help with choosing classes and picking careers as well as the Health Professions Advisor and the Center for Career Opportunities. Encourage them to make use of these resources.
- Depending on the field your son or daughter wishes to pursue, he/she may need to take a standardized aptitude test. These are: MCAT for medical and podiatric schools, DAT for dental schools, OAT for optometry programs, the PCAT for pharmacy and the GRE for many other health fields. These are intense exams and students are often under a lot of pressure before taking them.
- Professional programs require several letters of evaluation/recommendation. For medical (both MD and DO), dental, and optometry applicants, we have a service for electronically sending out letters through the Office of Health Professions Advising and we mail letters for other fields. Unfortunately, even if you are in a health care field yourself, most professional schools will not use a letter written by you on behalf of your child.
- The process of preparing for and applying to professional schools can be difficult. Your student will appreciate your support as they learn to take responsibility for this process and their future.



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